live perhaps at the most a hundred years, but here also, and only here, do the Buddhas appear to teach the right way of living which is the only way in which the people can progress to the heavenly regions and to Nirvana. Down below the earth are situated the hells, eight great ones and forty thousand and forty smaller hells, regions of torture and punishment. 796 772 775

Whereas the inhabitants of the northern, eastern and western islands around Myinmo, never hearing the words of a Buddha and never knowing the way of good and evil, are always born into the same world, never going up or down, man, the inhabitant of Zampudipa, may pass into the nethermost hell or the highest heavenly seat, according to the progress in his successive lives. Ascending the ladder from deep hells, through earth to heavenly regions, the spirit meets with existences which are not only more blessed in the degree of enjoyment and material happiness, but also correspondingly more free from fleshly desires and sin. Our Buddhist hells are the most frightening places one can imagine; as a child I used to look at the vivid pictures drawn in the friezes round pagoda building walls, to show the damnation that would befall the evil-doer who was born into a hell. Boiling in oil, flesh being torn off the bones by monstrous dogs and vultures, saws and knives aflame with red heat slowly dismembering limb from limb, all these occur in life in any of the hells. The next stage upwards from hell is a life as an animal, which a man may be born to for lesser sins and an omission from doing meritorious deeds. Animals have their stages of nobility also. Lowest are those living on excrements of flesh of other animals, nobler are the herbivorous animals and noblest of all the elephant. Gautama Buddha passed one of his existences as a white elephant, which is the reason for the esteem in which a white elephant was held—so high, that Buddhist kings longed to be able to style themselves, *Hsin-byu Shin*, [643]. Lord (Owner) of the white elephant. During his life as a man, a being had the opportunity to live a right life, observing the precepts, giving alms and attending the pagoda regularly. His next existence might then be as an inhabitant of one of the six seats of the Dewas. In all these six seats through which the being may progress, life is surrounded by delights of foods, clothing and dwelling, but passion is less sensual, and decreases with ascent. Successively, a touch of the hand, and then gazing at the lover, and finally the mere presence in the same existence is enough to satisfy love. From here, concentrated meditation will carry a being higher to the seats of the Byammas; here he must get rid of all remaining affection for matter, for all parts of the body, until he attains to the four seats of Arupa. The contempt for matter continues in these existences, and finally, when all false percussions leave the spirit, he passes into Nirvana, the lifeless, timeless state of bliss, in which the

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houses, for the niche shrines, if there are more than one at the pagoda, are always at the four cardinal points, and if there is only one, as is usual at small pagodas, it is to the East.

The sadā is carefully kept by the parents until the child is old enough to take care of it himself, and thenceforward it is guarded as the most valuable possession the person has. No matter how often the name is changed the new one is never put in the sadā, so that this certificate cannot be trusted to implicitly for a man's name. Some of them are very beautifully engraved and ornamented, but they are naturally not often to be seen. I only know of two in England at the present time (1881), one of which is my own and the other belonging to a travelling Burman. When a man dies, the sadā is either destroyed or preserved as a memento by the family. A great many sadās were found and carried off as curiosities during the Third Burmese War. There is one at Abbotsford.

A curious instance of the firm belief of the nation in the reasonableness of the conviction that the planet under which one is born influences the fates and actions of one's life, is the fact that royalty ordained that the coins and measures used by traders should bear the emblem of the monarch's birthday. Thus for example all the gold coins used in Upper Burma bazaars during the penultimate reign had the figure of a lion on them, Mindôn Min having been born on a Tuesday. The few remaining from previous reigns bearing other symbols were rigidly kept out of the sight of Burmese officials. The Convenor of the Fifth Great Synod, though probably the mildest and best sovereign Burma ever had, would certainly have stood no trifling in matters of this kind, which, if not amounting actually to a part of the religion, were at any rate very intimately connected with it. His son Thibaw Min, however, notoriously indifferent to religion, if a stronger word might not even be admissible, let the old weights remain in use, and probably called it the march of civilisation.

The naming and the construction of the sadā being finished, the principal events in the youthful Burman's life are over, and the children run about in as happy a state of nudity as the respectability of the family permits; and boys and girls steal grandmamma's cheroot, and potter about

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As yet they have not begun to demand an equal share 562 871
of education with the boys, and the only accomplishments most Burmese girls know are how to dress neatly, do up their hair, and powder their faces. This is the single open implication of their inferiority—except in worship at the pagoda, when every woman will pray that in another existence she may be a man—and it is not likely that female education will make much progress for another generation, the popular idea in Burma being that learning is no use to a girl when she has it, and she may, consequently, as well devote all her spare time to making herself look as pretty as possible. Here and there are a few who are deeply learned in Burmese literature. The young wife of one of the most prominent living Burman pleaders in Rangoon has as good a knowledge of the sacred books and as great a fluency in repeating Pali rituals as any pôngyi in the country. But the great majority of girls only know what they pick up from the conversation of their brothers and the men who come about the house. It is therefore greatly to their credit that they manage not only house affairs, but their husband's business into the bargain. A farmer's wife will carry out the sale of the whole rice crop to the agent of an English rice firm in her husband's absence, and generally strikes a better bargain than he would have made himself. If the village head constable is away, the wife will get together the policemen, stop a fight, arrest the offenders, and send them off to the lock-up all on her own responsibility. The wife sits by, no matter what public business is being transacted, and very often puts in her own opinion quite as a matter of course; in fact, she is virtual master of the house, and henpecked husbands are not by any means uncommon. The last king of Burma, Thibaw Min, was a notable instance. There never was a king of Burma before who remained for three years the husband of one wife. It was not inclination in his case. He had quite a number of *amourettes*; but the sturdy Supayā Lat and her formidable mother soon got the offending damsels out of the way. There is also little doubt that it was Supayā Lat and her mother who suggested the massacre of the Princes and prompted the defiance of the British Government, which brought about the ending of the Burmese monarchy.

[775] 562 [432] 562 581 643 175

[1] [i.e., girls--ANALYST]

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592 643 Dammathat. The sovereign always married at least one half-sister to ensure the purity of the royal blood, but, rather illogically, the issue of this union was not by any means necessarily heir to the throne. The son whom the king, or his ministers after his death, named, succeeded, or more commonly still, the son who could best maintain his position by force.

586 The liberty of divorce is practically unrestricted, except by the elaborate laws respecting the division of property. According to the Laws of Menu a woman may obtain a divorce among other reasons for the following: When her husband is poor and unable to support her; when he is always ailing; when he does not work and leads an idle life; when he is incapacitated by reason of old age; when he becomes a cripple after marriage.

And a man may obtain a divorce if his wife has no male children, if she has no love for her husband, or if she persists in going to a house where he tells her she must not visit, and so on.

The lawgiver seems in fact to have laid down that marriage is a civil contract which either party can dissolve; but, unless with good reason, the one that wishes to separate must suffer in property, more or less severely, according as the plea is good or bad.

Property, for this purpose, is said to be of three kinds. Pa-yin, property acquired by, or in possession of, persons before marriage. Let-htet-pwa, property acquired by husband or wife after marriage. Tin-thi, property inherited or obtained by gift. Pa-yin after marriage becomes hnit-pa-sôn, that is, the joint property of husband and wife, but only when it is agreed between them either before or after marriage that the property shall be put together for the mutual benefit.

In the event of a divorce both parties take away whatever pa-yin they may have had on marriage, and the let-htet-pwa is divided either by mutual agreement, or by the decision of the village elders who sanction the separation.

586 593 But divorces are far from being so common as most writers would have us believe. The warmth of family affection is one of the strongest traits of the race, and the

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CHAPTER XXIV

A GRACIOUS PLOUGHING

LIKE the "royal elder brother" of China, the king of Burma ought to go out once a year to plough the fields. Thibaw Min did not do it during the first two years of his reign, and, as far as I am aware, was equally heedless throughout the later years also. The consequences ought to have been disastrous. According to tradition, the failure of the Lètwin mingala to come off should have caused a drought all over the country. But the Mo hkaung did not ensue; on the contrary, there was Mo kaung: an aspirate makes all the difference between a water-famine and seasonable showers. King Thibaw went very little indeed out of his palace. The annals of the country supply too many instances of kings, who, having gone abroad, found on their return to the palace gates that a usurper had taken possession of the throne in the meantime, and had no better greeting for his predeceseor than a short shrift and a red velvet sack in which to plunge his body into the Irrawaddy. This unlovable custom had great weight with King Thibaw; but it was unwise of him to entirely abandon so venerable a tradition as the Lètwin mingala. It was at this ceremonial that one of the earliest marvels in the life of the Buddha Gautama happened. The king Thudawdana, with eight hundred noblemen save one, was ploughing the fields at the annual festival. Many country people came to see the great sight, and the city emptied itself. The maids who had charge of the little Prince Theidat laid him down under the shade of a tree and went to look on. The infant Buddha rose up as soon as they were gone, and sitting

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773 cross-legged in the fashion in which he is ordinarily represented in the images, became sunk in meditation. The careless maids all through the hot afternoon forgot about their princely charge, until the returning crowds and the setting sun reminded them of their neglect. Then they hurried to the tree and found that the Zampu tha-bye had maintained its shadow in the exact same position all day as it was in when Prince Theidat was first laid down. Notwithstanding the arc the sun had described, the shade had all along hung over the head of the meditating Payā Alaung.

241 796 643 The festival has therefore special reason to be celebrated by the descendants of the solar kings. It was also in every way a most picturesque fête, pleased the people, and offered a valuable opportunity for squeezing money out of them. King Mindôn never omitted it, even when he was grown old and portly, and little able to follow the slow-stepping bullocks. The ceremony took place in the beginning of June, about the time when the south-west monsoon usually breaks in Mandalay. The order went forth that the king would come out on such and such a day, and the people 643 were enjoined to get ready. Not to see him—far from it. 349 The right of a cat to look at a king in Mandalay was not well established. The Amein-daw was issued in order that the heads over ten houses, the Sè-eing gaungs, might see that the road in their district was in proper repair, and that the yazamat had not got out of order. The yazamat, or king's fence, was a kind of lattice-paling put up in every street in the walled town, and in any of those in the suburbs through which the king was likely at any time to pass. It was formed of thick diagonal spars made into hurdles, which were lashed to heavy posts sunk in the ground at regular intervals. The whole was whitewashed, and often flower-pots stood on the top of the posts to enliven the structure a little; and it certainly wanted enlivening a good deal. The lattice-fence undoubtedly looked very neat and tidy, as a long straight road lined with Lombardy poplars does; but it became terribly tiresome, when you found all the streets looking exactly the same, with this six-foot-high heavy wood fence standing within a couple of feet or so of

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the walls of the houses, and shutting out all view of these wooden structures. It had, however, to be kept in constant repair, and the house-reeve has to go round carefully to see that none of the whitewash had been rubbed off, nor any of the transverse bars sprung with the sun. Behind these the entire populace had to stay when the king, or any one of the queens, went out. Woe betide the wretch who was caught outside them when the procession had started. He might consider himself lucky if he escaped with only a belabouring from the fasces of the shrieking lictors. No one was supposed even to look through the little diamond-shaped holes. As a matter of fact they did; but by way of condoning for the offence, they rendered it more difficult by planting flowering shrubs between the bamboo houses and the lattice-work.

The procession on the route out to the Lèya, the royal acre, to be ploughed, was magnificent. The king was clad in all his robes of state: the paso with the daungyôp, the peacock sacred to royalty; the long silk surcoat, or tunic, so thickly crusted with jewels that its colour could not be seen; the tharapu, the spire-like crown, also a mass of precious stones; the twenty-four strings of the Order of the Salwè across his breast; and over his forehead the gold plate, or frontlet. The great gates in front of the stairs from the Hall of Audience were opened for him, Except the King of the Golden Throne no one might pass through them; there was the low red postern at the side for meaner beings—a shrewd device to make every one bow his head to the palace, whether he liked it or not. His majesty mounted the white elephant, which none save he might ride—for is not the noble creature a king himself?

The king mounted the Lord White Elephant at the palace of the latter, to the right of the Hall of Audience; but the princes and ministers, all of whom came to attend the great function in their robes of state, might not enter their howdahs till the stockade of the nandaw had been passed. Then they fell into line in order of precedence, the wuns and wundauks wearing their official mitres—tall red velvet hats, with the top curled back like a nautilus, and the base surrounded with a row of gilt spear-heads. The long

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the big rake once up and down the rain-sodden field—and then stops; for he is portly, and short of breath now. The ministers, no matter how fat they are, have to go on ploughing as long as the Arbiter of Existence chooses to look on. At last he declares that enough has been done, and preparations are made to go back again. He doffs his royal robes, for the tharapu, with its spire and jewelled ear-flappets, is burdensome, and the long surcoat, with its thousands of precious stones, is said to weigh about a hundred pounds. The Lord White Elephant is relieved too. He stalks back unencumbered, with his household of thirty retainers fussing about him with fans and swaying umbrellas.

The king gets into an open car, something like what Roman racing chariots are represented to have been. It is of course adorned as richly as everything else, and is drawn not by ponies or bullocks, but by men, eight of them pulling at each of the flexible shafts. The object is to prevent any one, the driver for example, sitting higher than the king. The English carriages presented at various times to different Burmese monarchs met with little approval. At first it was thought that the king was to sit on the box; but then it was found that with this arrangement there was nothing for it but that the driver should run by the side and therefore maintain a constant erect attitude in the presence of royalty. When it was found that the king was supposed to sit inside, with the driver two or three feet above him, a burst of indignation suggested that it was an insidious plot to put an insult on the majesty of the lord of the umbrella-bearing chiefs. For a time the vehicles were put away as lumber; but an ingenious handicraftsman adorned them with pyathats—five-roofed ecclesiastical or royal spires. They were now, when drawn by men, suitable for royal occupation; but unfortunately the solid teak-wood spires made them top-heavy, and especially unstable on rough Mandalay roads. They therefore degenerated into paraphernalia for exhibition on a kadaw day, or gauds for a procession at Tawadeintha feast time.

The king consequently returns on his low, gilt, native-made carriage, reclining on a mattress placed on the floor. He is now dressed in the ordinary national way, with a light

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643 linen jacket and a slender pawlôn (a fillet of book-muslin wound round the head), showing the thin white hair tied up in a little knot on the top of the head. The chief ministers are round about, fanning him assiduously; and he is in extreme good-humour, chaffing the Kin Wungyi, the astute prime minister, on the way he let his bullocks straggle away at random and the difficulties he got into in trying to turn them at the end of the field; while the stout old Naingan-gya Wun-dauk is rallied about the absurd state of heat he was brought into by his exertions. Possibly, if a venture-some and inquisitive subject were to be seen now, the king might pardon him for his rude gaping. But nobody knows in what temper the king is, and the silence is as death-like as when the party moved out. As soon, however, as the great procession has passed and has wound its way into the palace, the hitherto deserted streets are crowded again. Pwès begin with startling suddenness at every corner. Bands strike up; long lines of candles illuminate the streets at nightfall; rockets are let off, fire-balloons ascend, and every-thing is given up to rejoicing; for the lèdawgyi has been graciously ploughed, and the Lètwin mingala is a presage of abundant crops.

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It is needless to say that the persons mentioned are now all dead and that the British Government does not maintain the Lètwin mingala. The spectacle of the Lieu-tenant-Governor balancing himself on a harrow with the Commissioner of the Northern Division and the Judicial Commissioner for Upper Burma as acolytes, or rivals, would not be impressive. A striking spectacle has gone and cannot be revived.

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and pertinacity with which they defied the mosquitoes under the shade of the trees, and droned away on their pipes all through a tight-tunicked and perspiring Rangoon afternoon garden party, as the observant Burman imagined, at one endless tune. The national music is not written down, and each actor has a variation of his own, but the smallest girl in the audience would detect a kayāthan from a dobatthan with as much readiness as any English boy would distinguish "Drops o' Brandy" from the "Old Hundred"! But there are some people who do not like the Italian opera, and even say so. 533

The following short outline of the *Zawtagôbmma pyazat* will give an idea of the style of the more popular drama, as distinguished from the purely religious birth-story. The writer was an old player himself. He lived at Pegu, and the *Zawtagôbmma* was perhaps his most successful effort. The text has been published at one of the vernacular presses in Rangoon, and the sketch given is a translation of the Zatlan, the "path of the play," prefixed by the editor. "In the country of Pyinyawwada, of which Yazôtta was the sovereign, the name of the Southern Queen was Thunemadewi, and that of the Northern Queen Thukethidewi. The Queen of the Southern Palace was about to bear a child, and the king issued an order that her majesty of the North should attend on her. This was very irritating to the Northern Queen, and she resolved to ruin Thunemadewi, and for that purpose conspired with Shin Gwe Ni, the midwife. As soon as the child was born it was to be killed, and set afloat on the river in an earthen pot, and the *accoucheuse* was to say the Head Queen had been delivered of a still-born baby. A twin son and daughter were born, and Shin Gwe Ni put each of them in a jar and launched them on the river, and went and told the king that they were still-born. Yazôtta, the king, was very angry, and punished his consort by setting her to dig the ground and carry water for the palace. The Queen of the North was promoted to be Head Queen, and her daughter, Pyinsarupa, was made tabin-daing (*i.e.* she was set apart as wife for the next king, and not allowed to marry). 536 539 [643] [582]

"With regard to the bodies of the prince and princess.

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A special feature of the New Year's Feast was the formal washing of the king's head, called thi'gyan daw gyi. It is not to be supposed that his majesty washed his head only once a year, or that it is at any time an operation to be lightly undertaken, any more than it is by the humblest of his subjects. But at other times the ceremony was called hkaung-se mingala or thi'gyan daw hkaw, and was not attended with so great solemnity as characterised the function at the opening of a new year. Formerly the water for the purpose was annually brought up from Hkaung-se Gyun (Head-washing Island), a little rocky islet situated on the river opposite Maulmein. Hkaung-se Gyun is fabled to hang, with its little cluster of pagodas and monasteries, by an invisible cord from the heavens, and has therefore long enjoyed a special sanctity, not by any means reduced by the springs of clear bubbling water found on its limited surface. Therefore for long it supplied all the water for the royal head-washing. Latterly, however, it was abandoned, and with this there is a curious history connected. After the war of 1826, it was settled in a general way between the commissioners that the river Salween should form the boundary between Burma and the newly-acquired British province of Tenasserim. But later a question arose as to the ownership of the islands, and especially of the rich rice-growing Bilu-gyun, north and south of which the three rivers flow into the sea. After much fruitless palavering it was determined to leave the decision to chance. A couple of cocoa-nuts were tied together and taken some distance up the Salween and thrown into the water in the middle of the river. They went down bobbing gaily till they came to the place where the conflicting currents of the Gyaing and the Attaran come in, and there they twirled and twisted about in an aggravating way until at last an eddy caught them, and, carrying them past the old town of Martaban, decided for the Dayè outlet, through which they were swept away to sea. Thus the "Ogre's Isle" became British territory, and with it the little Hkaung-se Gyun. Nevertheless for many years water was still carried up to Mandalay for the thi'gyan law gyi, till at last Pegu was annexed to the British crown. Then it seemed undignified to carry the sacred water, not

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only from the stranger's land, but so many miles through alien waters, and so it was necessary to seek for another place. Where could a better be found than the mighty Irrawaddy itself? Accordingly from then on till there ceased to be a king of Burma, the necessary amount was drawn from the centre of the river by the Ye-kyi-wun, a minister specially appointed for that purpose.

As in so many other cases the amenities of the thi'gyan pwè have led to the extorting of money. In the good old days, and in the country districts still, it was the practice for benevolent people to keep open house, and give food and dainties to all passers-by, with tea and flavoured drinks, cheroots and betel for those that preferred them. To lighten the expense, contributions, called kèbo, were invited from friends and neighbours, and out of this has sprung the system of blackmail prevalent in Rangoon. A bevy of girls go into an Englishman's house and sprinkle him with lavender-water, or the moss-rose bouquet, so much in favour with Burmese belles. After a little badinage, they produce plain water, and threaten further operations unless something is given them. This they usually get, and if Englishmen complain of shameless extortion it is their own fault. The fair speculators are not such as any respectable girl would care to be seen with, and the prettinesses with scents are no more national than the scents are themselves. A provincial beauty would infinitely prefer a good honest ducking with vulgar water to the mawkish sentimentality of *eau de Cologne*. Some of the results of superior civilisation are very undesirable.

On the final day of the feast a gun is fired at noon to signalise the ascent of the thi'gya min to his happy realms again, and then all is over. The squirts are laid by for another year; clothes are hung up to dry, and nothing remains but to wait and see whether the pônnas are more successful than usual in their prognostications for the year.

The origin of the custom is no doubt the rain-making, described by Professor J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, but the Burmese explain it by a legend. The thi'gya min had a bet with a rival and the loser lost his head. This could not be allowed to be defiled by touching the ground, so it was caught by a daughter of Natdewas. Seven of them take it

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CHAPTER XLVII

THE LORD OF THE CELESTIAL ELEPHANT AND OF MANY WHITE ELEPHANTS

773 175 643 THE *Royal History of Kings* enumerates altogether 587,000 kings, following one another in regular succession. From Mahā Thamada, the great first ruler of land and of sea, there were 334,569 sovereigns till the time of the most excellent Buddha Gautama. From thence onward, the Mahā Yazawin carefully records the sequence of the predecessors of the last ruler of the Eastern Land, Thibaw Min. Western chroniclers point out incredulously that the hunter Aung Zaya, who died in 1760, founded the present dynasty under the title of Alaungpaya (commonly written Alompra), and till his rescue of the country from the victorious Peguans, held no more exalted rank than that of headman of his native village. But this scepticism ignores the doctrine of Kan, which provides that none can succeed to the throne of the Arbiter of Existence and Great Lord of Righteousness but those whose merit in previous existences entitles them to it.

643 The king emphatically rules by what is called in the Western kingdoms the right divine. The eldest daughter of the reigning king was always declared tabindaing, she was forbidden to marry till the death of the sovereign. When that occurred, if there were no sons to succeed, there was an interregnum till the tabindaing could find a husband to ascend the throne. This selection was not made by the laws of passion or personal inclination, but was solely decided according to the principles of kan. A royal chariot was harnessed to a fiery steed and driven away from the palace with no one to guide it. The horse roamed about,

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suffering no one to enter till he came to the person decided by fate to rule the country, usually some one of the royal lineage, or of some other princely line, who had wandered or been carried off from court. Then the horse waited patiently till the sleeper should wake up; the tales always represent the prince as asleep when the chariot arrives. When he rouses himself he steps into the chariot, and without guidance, the horse forthwith gallops back to the palace and the tabindaing finds a husband and the country a king. Alompra became sovereign, only in a slightly different way, but his descent from Mahā Thamada must be unimpeachable.

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Long before he took up arms and won for himself the throne, the soothsayers saw about him signs that betokened his coming dignity. When he slept his arms shone like fire; vultures perched on the houses of his enemies; gorgeous butterflies and gay-plumaged birds and strange animals entered his dwelling; he dug up an ancient image of the Buddha not far from his doorstep; when he came to fight it was manifest that he was favoured even beyond the great men of old. He possessed a sword that flew through the air and cut off heads; his shoes enabled him to clear miles at a stride; his fairy spear could spit a whole line of soldiers at once; his javelin could be hurled to any distance; finally, as a fifth weapon, he had a gun which never missed its mark, and was brought down to him by a thagyā. The possession of these five weapons at once proved his right to the throne and secured his holding it. It is true that some of the omens which signalised his right have appeared in others with very different result. A Karen minlaung, or embryo king, displayed the same fire-streaming arms, and raised a rebellion since the British occupation of Pegu. He gained a considerable following, and seemed formidable for a time, till the English wise men pointed out that the fiery glow was produced by rubbing phosphorus on his skin. Then all went against him as an impostor, and he very soon vanished into the hill-country. Similarly, in 1858, a poor fisherman at Twante, a large village not far from Rangoon, dragged up in his net a small image of the Buddha. Such discoveries are always looked upon as an omen of high

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destiny, and according to the common superstition, the fisherman believed that he would rise in dignity, restore the Talaing kingdom, and revive religion. He announced the supernatural call in the village bazaar. A few desperate characters joined him, took possession of the town, and issued a proclamation calling upon all the faithful to rally to his standard. But the British civil authorities stepped in and broke up the procession which was going in solemn state to the pagoda to inaugurate and consecrate the fisherman in his new profession. The claimant of royal honours escaped at the time, but was afterwards given up by the villagers. In each of these cases there was deception or misapprehension of the meaning of the omens, but the abundance of the signs in the case of Alompra disposes of the assertion that he was a mere adventurer. He himself thoroughly believed in his high destiny, and talked of it in right royal fashion to Captain Baker, an ambassador sent to him in 1755 by the Honourable East India Company. This gentleman, the commander of an East Indiaman, who, under the instructions of his employers, evidently regarded the great conqueror as little better than a savage, brought him a present of a chest or two of gunpowder, a couple of muskets and carbines, a gilt looking-glass, some red earth in bags, and half a dozen bottles of lavender water (there is no mention of glass beads), and offered Alompra the assistance of the great company. Whereupon his majesty burst into a defiant laugh and replied in the following fashion: "Have I asked, or do I want any assistance to reduce my enemies to subjection? Let none conceive such an opinion! Have I not in three years' time extended my conquests three months' journey in every quarter without the help of cannon or muskets? Nay, I have with bludgeons only, opposed and defeated these Peguans who destroyed the capital of this kingdom, and took the prince prisoner; and a month hence I intend to go with a great force to Dagôn (Rangoon), where I have an army now lying, when I will advance to the walls of Pegu, blockade and starve them out of it, which is the last town I have now to take to complete my conquest, and then I will go in quest of Bourno (the French governor of Syriam, whom he afterwards actually did put to

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death). Captain, see this sword; it is now three years since it has been constantly exercised in chastising my enemies; it is indeed almost blunt with use; but it shall be continued to the same till they are utterly dispersed. Do not talk of assistance. I require none. The Peguans I can wipe away as thus (drawing the palm of one hand over the other). See these arms and this thigh (drawing his loose coat-sleeve up to the armpit, and lifting his pasoh, so as to display a bare tattooed leg); amongst a thousand you cannot see my match. I can crush a hundred such as the King of Pegu." (Quoted from Crawford.)

Two years later he talked to Ensign Lester in the same bombastic strain, telling him that he would go to Madras, and that if a nine-pounder shot was to hit him it could do him no harm, with a good deal more to the same effect. He is described at this time, when he was about forty-five years of age, as five feet eleven in height, and of a powerful build, with a long, but not a thin face, the expression not being improved by a number of smallpox pitmarks. He had a broad but very retreating forehead, a characteristic shared by all his descendants, and prominent in the case of King Mindôn.

Alaungpaya, then, was no feeble founder of the present line of successors to the great Mahā Thamada. He certainly had the power to command, and his military successes carried the peacock flag from far away towards Dacca, down to the Siamese capital. Assuredly he was a worthy follower of the great first king, and the Burmese believed firmly in the unbroken character of the succession. Accordingly all the old Indian and Sakyan customs were carefully observed by the Burmese royal family. Such were the marriage with half-sisters, and the consequent preserving unmarried of the king's eldest daughter; the reverence of the three most excellent animals, the peacock of the sun, the hare of the moon, and the kalawaik, the carrying bird of Vishnu, whose eyes like jewels look friendly on the stranger; and the beit-theit, the consecration by pouring out of water at the accession. Marriage with half-sisters was only allowed to the king, not to the people at large, or even to the princes of the blood-royal. The throne was painted over with representations of

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643 the peacock and the hare, typifying the descent of the king from the solar and lunar races, which was also directly laid claim to in the title, netwetbuyin, sovereign of the rising sun. Similarly with the titles khattia, implying that he had dominion over the crops, and yaza, because he could instruct men in the laws, a somewhat doubtful ability in regard to all except perhaps King Mindôn. The consecration by beittheit was completed in three special ceremonies, as was the case with the Payālaung chosen to be the first ruler.

1. Yaza-beit, the consecrating of him as king.

2. Manda beittheit, the solemn marrying him to a queen of royal lineage.

3. Thenga beittheit, the confirmation or renewal of his engagement to abide by the laws, whereupon full powers for the government and administration of the country are conferred.

643 773 177 793 The actual coronation ceremony was latterly a mere form, but was intended to mark the claim of the Lord of the Golden Palace to be the representative of the universal monarch, the Sekyawadé king, who never makes his appearance during the time allotted to the publication and duration of the religious institutions of a Buddha. It consisted principally in incantations and sprinkling with holy water from the Ganges, performed by the pônnas, the Brahmin astrologers; the Burman yahans had nothing whatever to do with it. Besides the pônnas, only a few of the chief ministers were present. The really national part of the ceremony was the royal progress round the city moat, made seven days after the beittheit. The king left 643 175 the city by the Eastern Gate, the precise moment being notified by a discharge of cannon. He then entered the state barge, a most gorgeously gilt and carved construction, surpassing even the traditional coach of the Lord Mayor of London. This boat was then slowly rowed round the moat, with music clashing all around, and bands of dancers supplying the place of a rejoicing populace. Then when the circuit had been completed, the newly crowned monarch entered again between the guardian ogres of the Eastern Gate, a fresh salvo of artillery announcing the arrival at the palace. The ceremony was simple enough, but King

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Thibaw never went through it. In the first days of his reign he was afraid to leave the nandaw, lest conspirators might find the chance too good a one to lose, and later on, a fear that the delayed festival might suggest ideas of previous faint-heartedness came in the way. Consequently, though he was crowned successor to Mahā Thamada as far as the beittheit was concerned, and therefore became the source of the law, the guardian of the welfare of the country, the recipient of the revenues, and the chief administrator of justice, he was no proper successor to the warlike Alaungpaya. Possibly the failure to assume the sturdy spirit of the first of the family may account for the deficiency in some of the attributes derived from the first king, a deficiency which even the most loyal of his subjects did not hesitate to admit.

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The first ruler was chosen for his strict adherence to the five fundamental precepts now incumbent on all men, and for his general sanctity. These qualities are inherent in all successors, though sometimes it is difficult to distinguish them. From them sprang four other laws incumbent on all kings and rulers. These thengaha, kingly laws, or byammazoya are as follows:—

1. Thathameda, ordaining that he shall not receive more than a tithe of the produce of the country.

2. Purithameda, ordaining that the king shall engage to pay his servants and army once every six months.

3. Thamapatha, by which the king binds himself to assist his subjects with money, and to receive payment of it within three years, without charging interest.

4. Wāsapaya, the use of courteous and fitting language, according to the age and position in life of the persons addressed.

It is to be feared that these kindly kingly laws were not found suitable to the conditions of modern society. At any rate they were not very strictly observed by Thibaw Min.

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Nevertheless that monarch was very far from being such an unlovely character as most Europeans have been led to believe. It was explicitly denied by many that he drank at all; it is certain that whatever excesses he may have plunged

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643 175 into in the remorse caused by the massacres of February 1879, he was assuredly not a confirmed drunkard. His worst fault was that he was easy, or call it weak-spirited if you like. It is an open secret that he was not intended to be king. His father, Mindôn Min, had a strong liking for the young yahan, but his intention, if he had any, was that the pious and well-read Nyaungyan prince, who died a refugee at Barrackpore, near Calcutta, was to be his successor, and if the court or the town had been polled, the choice would have fallen on the same burly, good-natured individual.

643 [835] It must be understood that, notwithstanding the precautions for the preservation of the pure blood-royal, the system of keeping a princess tabindaing, to be married to the new ruler, it by no means followed that the eldest son of this union, or, indeed, any son by this queen at all, necessarily succeeded to the throne. It was not often that there was a recognised Eingshemin, an heir-apparent to the throne, but when there was such a dignitary, he might be the fifth, or the tenth, or the thirtieth son, the only stipulation being that he should be the child of one of the four chief queens. The nomination rested with the king. A consideration of the gruesome history of the parricide kings, who reigned in one of the countries of the Myissi Madetha, the middle country, as India is called, each of whom ascended a throne stained with a father's blood, until the horrified populace of Pataliputra revolted and exterminated the whole house; the reading of this bloody chapter in the royal annals may have prompted the custom, but it is certain that it is not often that the heir to the throne was recognised. Mindôn made no sign till his last illness came upon him. Then when it was evident that he could not survive, he named the Nyaungyan mintha and after him the yellow-robed Thibaw prince. Then palace intrigue began. The Thibaw prince, it was well known, had a passion for the tabindaing, Selin Supaya (Selina Sophia as she was called by some of the English residents in Mandalay), and the second of the Supayās, for there were three of them, was equally enamoured of the young Patama Byan. Therefore the

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queen-mother resolved to gratify all parties, and become herself queen dowager. She opened up communications with the then all-powerful Kin Wunmingyi, the Premier as he was usually called. That able minister saw continued power in store for himself if he could get the unsophisticated pyin-sin placed on the throne. Therefore he threw himself into the plot. The princes were summoned by a forged royal order to come before his majesty, bid him farewell, and hear his nomination of a successor. As they came up to the hmawgaw, the mirror throne room, where the kings body afterwards lay in state, they were seized separately and forthwith hurried off to prison. The Nyaungyan and his brother, the Nyaungôk prince, received timely warning, and instead of coming to the palace went straight off for sanctuary to the English Church, whence they afterwards escaped, disguised, to the protection of the British flag in the compound of the British Residency. But though they thus saved their lives, as appeared five months afterwards, when the other princes were done to death, the throne was lost, for Thibaw was left master of the situation, and soon completed his arrangements for securing his position. At first everything went well. It was necessary to retain the support of the Kin Wungyi, and that astute minister, acting on the idea that he could easily manage the raw young exneophyte, proceeded to draw up a scheme for a constitutional government, the greater part of which was written for him by the late Dr. Clement Williams, the first English Resident in Mandalay, and afterwards an independent trader. This constitution was published with a great flare of trumpets and much talk about the establishment of Western methods, and the raising of Burma to the rank of a first-class Eastern power. The people at large did not perceive any very radical difference, as far as the payment of moneys was concerned, under the new system. Perhaps it would have turned out well if it had lasted. But it was not destined to last.

As soon as the funeral rites of the dead king were over, and Thibaw Min had been sprinkled with the consecrated water by the pônnas, he proposed to marry "Selina Sophia," and take the younger sister, the Supayalat, along with her

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according to agreement. But the tabindaing was not willing. On the contrary, she took the altogether unprecedented step of cutting off her hair and entering a nunnery. The slighted golden monarch was furious. The two luckless maids of honour of the scornful beauty had their hands chopped off by the "spotted man." What became of the nun herself no one seems to know. Whether she went to her grave or to a jungle convent is a matter which neither her friends nor her enemies ever revealed. Thibaw Min at any rate had to be satisfied with the Supayalat. He very soon found that he had quite enough to do with her. The mother had always been known as strong-minded; the daughter developed an even greater amount of determination, and between them they soon reduced the ruler of the umbrella-bearing chiefs to submission. It had never been their intention that the Kin Wungyi should derive the greatest part of advantage from the scheme for enthroning the Thibaw prince, and they gradually worked his majesty into a state of desperation. However meek he might be towards them, he soon became embarrassingly testy with his courtiers, and after a time took to using what was called Tharrawaddy's spear. Kônbaung Min, that fiery descendant of Alaungpaya, in his latter years amused himself with spearing his courtiers with a javelin he always kept by him. This trait, which soon grew into a regular homicidal mania, and led to his being smothered in the end, seemed to have broken out afresh in the young king, and the Rangoon papers began to talk of hereditary insanity. Soon, however, the whole civilised world was to be shocked. The queen mother and the Supayalat persuaded the king that he would never be safe till the princes were put out of the way. It is said that Thibaw Min at first flatly refused, and then, broken down by daily taunts, pleaded the danger from the British Government. Here also, however, he was overruled. The queen dowager called in a European (not an Englishman), and asked what would be done if all the imprisoned princes were massacred? He answered there would be a great deal of talk and nothing more. So Thibaw gave in, and said, "Shin-ba se, let them be cleared away"; and seventy of the royal blood, men, women, and children, were murdered in the next three days, and buried

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within the palace, in a long trench dug for the purpose. The eldest prince, the Mekhaya, a man nearly three times Thibaw's age, and hated for his fierce, proud demeanour, died shrieking for mercy at the hands of his own slaves, whom he had often tortured. The Thonsè mintha, equally overbearing in his manner, and a fanatical hater of the English, whom he lost no opportunity of insulting, gained in his death an esteem he had never known while living. With his last breath he hurled defiance and imprecations at the brother whom he had always despised, and prophesied a speedy and bloody end for the "runaway monk." The weakly and gentle-mannered Maingtun murmured a prayer that the hideous sin of murder might be pardoned to its instigator and perpetrators, and then resigned his neck to the club which sent him to the blissful seats of nat-dewas. The princesses were subjected to nameless horrors, and the treatment of the children recalled the days when ravaging hordes marched through the land with babes spitted on their pike staffs for standards. The poor old regent of Pegu, governor at Rangoon when the British came in 1852, had his nostrils and gullet crammed with gunpowder, and was thus blown up. But the tale of horrors is not one to enlarge upon. They were conducted by those who became the king's most trusted advisers. All the three days bands of music were playing throughout the palace, and dancers posturing to divert attention from what was going on, and to drown the cries of the victims.

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The custom of putting to death all dangerous rivals on the accession of a new king was without doubt almost a recognised thing in Burma whenever there was a new sovereign. Many Burmans defend it warmly, on the plea that it secured the peace of the country. Where there were so many of the royal blood, the appointment of one, possibly among the youngest, to the supreme power, could not but lead to discontent, breaking out into open rebellion when the slighted found themselves strong enough to feel hope of success for a rising. The accession of Mindôn was marked by no such atrocities, but he came to the throne under exceptional circumstances. His brother, the Pagān Min, was deposed because he would do nothing to make peace with the English, then threatening

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to occupy the capital, which they were so near effecting in the first war of 1826. The deposed king was allowed to live happy with his game-cocks. The people's idol, the fiery "War Prince," was passed over because he was pledged to fight to the death, and there was an explicit understanding that he, or failing him, his issue, should succeed to the royal honours on the death of King Mindôn. That pious and enlightened monarch was forced on the country by a happy necessity. But it was very different when he died. There was no war to distract the people, and further, there was a multiplicity of candidates. The Convener of the Fifth Great Synod had, during his lifetime, fifty-three recognised wives, besides an indefinite number of handmaidens. By the wives he had altogether one hundred and ten children, forty-eight sons and sixty-two daughters. Of the forty-eight sons only twenty-four were alive at the time of his death, and two of these were detained as political prisoners in India, the Myingun and Myingundaing princes, the originators of the rebellion of 1866, when the "War Prince" was killed, and the king himself had a narrow escape. The Myingundaing died many years ago in India; the Myingun still lives on an allowance from the French Government in Saigon.

There were thus twenty-two possible successors to the Golden Throne. One was a lunatic—the Kyabin Mintha; four were little boys under ten years of age, others were disqualified for a variety of reasons, but there remained the Thonsè, the Mekhaya, the Nyaungyan, and the Nyaungôk, all of whom were considered as having certainly greater claims than the actual successor. Thibaw Min wanted to keep them all in prison, and a range of barracks was actually being constructed for their occupation when the massacres occurred. Whatever foreigners may think, all Burmans lay the guilt of the executions at the door of the queen and the queen dowager. When some were killed, prudential motives, as well as a ghoul-like thirst for blood, prompted the murder of all, and this accordingly was carried out. Of all the twenty-four princes, excluding the king, there were left alive but four little boys in sanctuary in Mandalay monasteries, one of them barely five years old, and three refugees in India, one of the four, the Mingundaing

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prince, having died soon after. Of the princesses, thirty-five of whom survived their father, four were killed in the February massacres, and twenty-one kept in confinement in the palace, some of whom almost certainly died of want or external violence. The remainder were of too little account to be taken notice of. Thirty-seven queens were alive when the late king died. Thirteen fled when his illness became dangerous, and so extinguished themselves. Twenty-three were kept in underground dungeons, or under close surveillance in the palace; one only, the mother of the Mekhaya, with fourteen of her children and grandchildren, were killed in 1879. This is rather a dismal list, and the shadow of it rested over the royal throne. Whether Thibaw Min was the direct author of the tragedy or not, the stain of the crime and the recollection of it clung to him. After its accomplishment, the king fell more and more under the malign influence of the termagant queen. The Kin Wungyi and his constitution were ignominiously bundled out of the palace. The former all-powerful minister became little more than a private citizen, and the vile conductors of the massacres were the chief in authority. With their lotteries and monopolies they had very soon brought the country to ruin, had it not been for the blessing of English rule.

Personally, Thibaw Min could not be otherwise than miserable. The harridan queen kept him in most humble subjection. Hitherto every king of Burma had had at least four chief queens, those of the east, west, north, and south palaces, of whom the southern queen was supreme. But Supayalat persisted in remaining sole controller of the royal heart. Terrible stories are told of the death by lingering torture which proved the portion of maids of honour on whose charms the unhappy king is said to have looked with favour. Such an unusual state of things, such a disgrace as a woman's slave for a king, had never befallen any country before. A son was born in the end of 1879, but he died of smallpox in the epidemic of March 1880, and a daughter in the end of the same year compared but badly with King Mindôn's three or four a year.

The king was practically a prisoner within his golden walls. No king of Burma had ever been much in the habit

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of leaving the palace. Possession of it, with the vast arsenal which it contained, implied the subduing of the entire country. When a monarch went forth to worship at a pagoda or preside at some function, he left the nandaw in charge of the prince or minister whom he could best trust. But poor Thibaw Min could trust no one, or at any rate believed that this was his state. From the time he succeeded to the throne till he left it a prisoner, he never went outside the palace walls.

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CHAPTER XLVIII

KING THIBAW

[The following three chapters remain as they were written in 1880.]

I.—A PRIVATE INTERVIEW

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TIME was, when to get an interview with the Arbiter of Existence was as difficult a matter as to see the Grand Lama, or the Sherif ul Islam of Mecca. When the servants of "the Foreign Woman," Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, protested in 1879 against the new sovereign's summary settlement of domestic matters, Thibaw swore a royal oath by the sacred hairs of Gautama, by the Lord, the Law and the Assembly, the three precious things, that he would never look on a white man again. For a year the vow was religiously kept, and ambitious "globe-trotters" and prying special correspondents were kept at a distance, and had not even the satisfaction of being admitted within the outer gate of the nandaw. In time, however, the royal coffers got low, and it was thought foolish not to make use of the barbarian merchants, seeking for monopolies and grants of forest land, and able and willing to pay enormous sums for such concessions. His majesty's ministers therefore speedily found means of relieving the great King of Righteousness from his solemn oath. The first principle of the Buddhist faith is charity. How, then, could the Lord of the Rising Sun gain more merit and advance some miles on the noble Eightfold Path better than by conquering his just personal antipathies and allowing awe-stricken foreigners to grovel before the splendour of his effulgence and worship at

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his Golden Feet! When once they had experienced that supreme delight, his majesty's ministers might be trusted to see that the wealth of the merchants was made to subserve the royal interests. And so it came to pass that Thibaw first received a few speculators and their friends, and has ended by granting an audience to any European that can get a minister to speak for him. And so the Golden Hairs are forgotten, and the three precious things calmly flouted. Still the royal barbarian is not comfortable at these interviews. He was too curious to be dignified. He had not the fund of conversation that his father had, and he was impatient apparently of being looked at, as strangers in remote parts of China and wild beasts in zoological gardens may be supposed to be.

Securing an interview is not always an easy matter, unless you are a great capitalist, desirous of a grant somewhere. If you merely wish to see his majesty, the process is somewhat difficult. You probably apply first of all to the Chevalier Andreino, Italian Consul in Mandalay, and master of ceremonies and mysterious "doing duty" man at the Burmese Court. He may get you the desired audience, but more probably refers you to one of the higher ministers. Almost certainly these officials will say that it is impossible for you to see the king. His majesty is too busy, "working hard all day at affairs of state"; and they gaze stolidly upon you. You regret the circumstance extremely, make the minister a present of a few hundred rupees, and continue to deplore your bad luck. Then he brightens up suddenly, recollects that on such and such a day his majesty is possibly free. He will find out and do his best for you.

Next day you are told that an interview will be granted, that the king of kings graciously permits you to come and place your head under his gilded feet. If you are a wise man and have been warned by considerate friends, you will now commence to practise sitting on your feet. It is as well to rehearse the process frequently beforehand, for they must be tucked away so that his majesty cannot see them; and if you do not find the most agreeable way of effecting the concealment, your audience will be chiefly memorable to you for frightful agony, a vast amount of internal "popular

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language," and vows of vengeance against the ministers, who seem to have an irritating faculty of grinning all down their backs.

The journey to the palace is not a pleasant preparation. It is too hot to ride, and accordingly you decide to go in the apotheosis of a dog-kennel on wheels, which does duty for a carriage in Mandalay. There is not room for much more than one Englishman in the vehicle, and the only way you can get in is by scrambling over the backs of the bullocks. I shall never forget my first experience of a Mandalay carriage. After an exciting ten minutes spent in trying to circumvent a kicking bullock, I at length got in and sat down on the floor—there are no seats—to gaze out at the round hole by which I had got in. The rest of the party followed, each man in a kennel of his own. The beasts set off at a swinging trot over roads of the early depraved order, and in a couple of minutes we were all regretting that we did not brave the sun and ride, or even walk. However, the drivers disregard our entreaties, and hustle up the cattle all the more energetically. We pass over the moat, and through the enormous wooden gateway into the walled town. We enter by the a-mingala gate, the south-western, the only one through which corpses are allowed to be taken from the city. It is almost invariably used by Englishmen as being nearest to the Residency and the river, but no upper-class Burman will pass through it if he possibly can avoid doing so. After five minutes' more jolting we arrive at the outer stockade of the palace, and get out of our conveyances with some alacrity and a lot of bruises. Immediately inside the gate is a guard-house, with a cluster of the royal soldiery, who, as we come up, squat down on the ground and hold their Enfields in front of them at the third motion of the present, looking like frogs on a Christmas card.

We cross a wide open space, pass through the "Red Postern," and turn to the left, for it is to be a private reception, and we do not ascend the steps to the Hall of Audience. We pass a gallop which Thibaw has laid down for his ponies, and enter the Royal Gardens. They are not much to speak of. Laid out in squares, with raised paths, deep brickwork canals running in every direction, grottoes and

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the English Resident run away? Or perhaps it is the European experience of the Pangyet Wun that we have to thank. At any rate, the corridors and passages are covered with thick soft carpets, three or four deep, and we walk along in comfort, if with a somewhat undressed feeling.

It is not far to the Hmaw-gaw. We find the chamber almost empty. A thick carpet, woven in one piece, covers the floor, and the far side is raised a couple of feet above the rest of the room. On this dais stands a couch. The Pangyet Wun tells us to sit down and not to speak. We obey, and stare at the couch and a door behind it. Again we have misgivings. Mindôn Min used to keep visitors waiting a trifle of an hour or so, till they got so cramped that they had to be hoisted on to their legs. But it is not so with his son. He comes almost immediately, jerking himself suddenly in at the door, as if somebody had stuck a pin into him behind, walks hurriedly to the couch, kicking off his slippers on the way, and throws himself upon it, with his elbows sunk in the crimson and gold cushions. He looks straight at us for about thirty seconds, and then falls to examining his finger-nails and the carpet. He is embarrassed; his father was embarrassing. The pious potentate used to scrutinise his visitors (at a distance of twenty feet or so) through a field-glass, and people who were not overawed used to grin, which required explanation. King Thibaw comes alone, except that there is a page with cheroots. The gigantic gold spittoon and betel-nut box and other salivating and chewing paraphernalia, which were deposited before his late lamented father, are wanting. He knocks off the ash of his green cheroot on the carpet and presently lets it go out. Meanwhile the thandawsin, the royal herald, has commenced chanting our names, business, and the list of our presents. This is done in a high-pitched recitative, and takes a long time, for all the names, styles, and titles of his majesty are declaimed for a matter of quarter of an hour, each sentence ending with a long-drawn payā-a-ah.

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At last it is over, and Thibaw asks if we are well. We announce that we are, and the interpreter, who throughout sees fit to translate bald monosyllables into obsequious, not

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CHAPTER XLIX

KING THIBAW

II.—THE MANY-TITLED

643 His most glorious, excellent majesty, the present ruler of the city of Mandalay, or Yatanabông Nepyidaw, ruler of the sea and land, lord of the rising sun, sovereign of the empires of Thumaparanta and Zampudipa, and of other great empires and countries, and king of all the umbrella-bearing chiefs, lord of the mines of gold, silver, rubies, amber, and the noble serpentine, chief of the Saddan, or celestial elephant, and master of many white elephants, the supporter of religion, owner of the sekya, or Indra's weapon, the sun-descended monarch, sovereign of the power of life and death, great chief of righteousness, king of kings, and possessor of boundless dominions and supreme wisdom, the arbiter of existence, has a very bad character. He killed his brothers and sisters and he drinks gin.

643 [175] He is very far from being a fool for all that. All his predecessors killed certain of their relatives too when they came to the throne; only they had not so many as Thibaw, and there were no electric telegraphs in those days. Besides, they had not such pressing need to clear the field. Thibaw was put on the throne by a palace intrigue, and if he had not disposed of his brothers they would probably have killed him. So say all his majesty's subjects, and they ought to know. The drinking of plebeian gin is another matter, and is likely to be the ruin of the many-titled monarch. It is telling on him fast. When he came to the throne he was a very good-looking young man, the

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handsomest Burman in the country, people used to say. Two years and a half have, however, made a very great difference. His majesty's flat nose has become flatter than ever; his forehead seems to have more of the snake's slope back than even the most typical of his family; and his round face is all bloated and blotched. When we had an interview with him, he had a scratch across his face from the eye over the left cheek, and it was a question whether the queen had done it or not. It did not add dignity to a manner which was not by any means ideally kingly. It was a private interview certainly, and we did not therefore expect to see him gorgeous in a silk surcoat and spire-like tharapu or crown. But it seemed somewhat negligent to appear in a soiled white short coat and a plain check pattern, yellow silk pasoh, such as any ordinary townsman might wear. In his ears certainly were splendid gold cylinders, with magnificent clusters of diamonds and emeralds at the ends, and on his finger glistened a sapphire ring worth a monarch's ransom. There was a spray of diamonds in his hair too, but it only sufficed to draw attention to the fact that he had neglected his toilet, which is a bad sign in a young man! All Burmans wear their long hair tied up in a knot on the top of their head. Thibaw, however, stepped out of a monastery on to the throne, and in the monasteries every one has his head shaved. The royal hair has therefore not had time to grow very long yet, and his majesty makes up his yaung, or top knot, with false tresses, as many humbler Burmans do, only they take care over it, which he does not. This is the worst sign of all; for when a Burman ceases to take pride in his hair he must be very far gone.

There are very considerable doubts as to his majesty's legitimacy. In any case he is not a pure Burman. His mother had a good deal of wild Shan blood in her veins. Just before Thibaw's birth it was discovered that his mother was unpardonably intimate with a pôngyi, one of the mendicants of the royal monastery. The monk was thrown into prison, and died there very suddenly of official colic. The queen was sent to a nunnery, where she remained till Thibaw came to the throne. She had better have stayed there for good. A year ago there was a fearful scandal.

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Some thirty people about the Court were beheaded, and the queen dowager was relegated to the convent.

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Thibaw himself was brought up in an uncle's house and used to be unmercifully bullied by his cousins. When Dr. Marks, the eminent S.P.G. missionary, came to Mandalay and established a school, the late king asked what was the best age for a Burman to commence learning English. The reverend gentleman said, "About twelve years old." King Mindôn called for "all his sons that were twelve years old or thereabouts." Eleven were produced, and among them was Thibaw. The future king went to the royal school, but he sat apart from his late victims, and never came to school on the same elephant with them. He was a surly, morose boy, not very good at his lessons, and once or twice narrowly escaped the usual result of such conduct. I believe he was never actually birched, but he had several times to stand in the corner. When he left he was able to read a little, but he has forgotten all his English now. He used to be fond of cricket, and slogged away in fairly good pendulum form; but he never would field out, and used unprincely language to any one who bowled him. He was the youngest of the batch by a month or two, and was always quarrelling with his brothers and bullying the wretched slave who attended him and carried his cheroots and betel-nut. But nobody paid much attention to his vagaries then, for he was twentieth or thirtieth son, and the Mekhaya prince, the eldest, might very easily have been his father, or even grandfather.

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After he left the S.P.G. Royal School, King Mindôn made him a koyin, a neophant, in the royal monastery. There he seemed to get on better. At any rate when his novitiate was over, he passed with honours as Patama Kyaw, an examination in the Bitaghat thônbông, the three "baskets" of the Buddhist law, and sundry other volumes of ritual and controversy. This was what first drew the old king's attention to him. Mindôn Min was a very pious old gentleman, and had a particular delight in his title of Convener of the Fifth Great Synod. When therefore young Thibaw made a score in the Turanian Theological Tripos, his father bored everybody with his talk about the juvenile

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divine, and was not far off imagining that he was an embryo Budh. Thibaw an avatar of Arimadeya! Bradlaugh in the Salvation Army! Other people knew better even then. Even in those days Thibaw was a disgraceful little rip. The present Queen of the South and sundry other little petticoats came to flirt with him and his companions in the monastery. An ascetic should not even look at a woman, and the old kyaungpogo, the abbot of the royal mendicants, was terribly scandalised, and it is whispered about that he tied the raffish young princeling's hands up to a tree and swished him soundly. Some colour is lent to the report by the fact that Thibaw dismissed the venerable recluse as soon as he ascended the throne. However that may be, the old king heard nothing about it, and went on believing the "Senior Theolog" to be a miracle of piety and learning, and the sacred cocks and hens on Mandalay Hill had double rations for a month in honour of the event. Nevertheless, he did not by any means intend Thibaw to succeed him on the throne. The Nyaungyan was the man he named. But the mother of the Supayalat, now Thibaw's queen, took the matter in hand. She knew that Thibaw was deeply in love with her daughter, and thought she could easily manage the moon-struck, Pali-spouting novice. She communicated her views to the Kin Wunmingyi, the head of the ministry. That diplomatic old gentleman was equally deceived, and thought he would have no trouble in leading the verdant recluse as he pleased. The matter was arranged; the elder princes were all seized and thrown into prison before Mindôn Min died. Thibaw tolerated the Kin Wunmingyi for a short time, and let him formulate a wonderful production which the Turanian Foreign Secretary called a constitution. When the simple quondam mendicant found himself firm on the throne, and when the Nyaungyan, his great fear, had got away from the British Residency in Mandalay, and was safe in Calcutta, Thibaw threw off the mask. Eighty-six of his blood relations were battered and choked to death, or buried alive. The Kin Wungyi's hapless constitution was crumpled up nd chucked over the frontier, and Thibaw stood forth as e most inhuman of a long line of savage despots. The

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643 [644] [177·64] Kin Wunmingyi, who, after all, had been to Europe and was versed in public affairs, lost all influence, and was succeeded as adviser by the Taingda Mingyi, a statesman of the typical oriental kind, supple, unscrupulous and grasping. Thibaw even achieved a certain kind of popularity with his subjects. He insulted our representative and blustered at all foreigners, and finally frightened the Indian Government by covert threats into suddenly withdrawing the whole *personnel* of the Residency. Then it was announced by sound of gong all over Burma that the Sovereign of Land and Water, by reason of his great might and glory, had caused the hated English to flee from his sight, and would, in his own good time, carry the great peacock flag to the south, and plant it once more on the shores of the Gulf of Martaban.

643 648 175 It is a great triumph for the pôngyi's son, as he was nicknamed when it was safe to do so, and it will be remembered about him quite as long as the fiendish cruelty of his massacres. We have certainly not done with Thibaw yet. We cannot go on for ever keeping strong garrisons at Thayet-myo and Toungoo, our frontier stations, where the soldiers have little else to do but die of fever and cholera and heat-apoplexy. Constant scares ruin the trade in Rangoon, and, as Lord Ripon says, when we are attacked in our mercantile interests we are wounded in our most irritable point. The abrogation of the monopolies is little better than a sham, and the negotiations for a new treaty are little more sincere. Thibaw will not receive a new Resident in the Royal City, except shoeless and practically lying on his stomach. We can hardly agree to that again.

The rupture came six years later, brought about by secret treatings with France and autocratic dealings with the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation. The Burmese kingdom fell with the suddenness of a paralytic stroke, and King Thibaw was a prisoner within a month of his rejection of the British ultimatum. He now lives forgotten at Ratnagiri.

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CHAPTER LII

THE LORD WHITE ELEPHANT

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THE importance attached to the possession of a white elephant is traceable to the Buddhist system. The form in which Gautama Buddha entered the womb of Queen Maya to be born upon earth for the last time to "teach the Law and give the millions peace" was that of a white elephant. The Saddan, or celestial elephant, was an avatar of his many existences previously. The Saddan is gifted with special endowments, and is one of the seven precious things the possession of which marks the Sekyawadé, the Mahā Chakra Vartti Raja, "the great wheel-turning king," the holy and universal sovereign—a ruler who appears in once a cycle, at the time when the waxing and waning term of human life has reached its maximum of an athinkaya (a huge period represented by a unit and 164 cyphers) in duration. Thus the possession of an undoubted white elephant stands as a sign and symbol of universal sovereignty; and every Burmese king longed for the capture of such a treasure during his reign as a token that his legitimate royalty is recognised by the unseen powers. The great river of Burma, the Irrawaddy, is named from Airawata, the elephant of Indra, a sufficient assertion of the proper dwelling-place of all his successors. Hence the reverence of the Hindoos for the animal, and their not infrequent pilgrimages to Mandalay to see the royal creature and have a dursun, or interview of worship, with him.

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All the elephants in the country, whether wild or tame, belonged to the king: whoever captured one had to give him up to the king, and he granted permission to the princes and to a few of the higher dignitaries to use them. The

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lucky discoverer of a white elephant was made a mingyi, and was exempted from taxes and burdens of every kind for the rest of his life. Red and spotted elephants were also held in great esteem.

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White crows, rats, mice, and hares are common and easily distinguished; but it is different with a white elephant. He is not to be considered as snow-white: very far from it. All the white elephants now existing in Siam and Burma are of a light mouse colour, somewhat of the same tint as the pale freckles to be found on the trunk of almost every ordinary elephant. This light grey is uniform all over, the spots on the trunk being white. The depth of the colour, however, varies greatly; and there are often blemishes in the shape of darker patches which would seem to ruin an otherwise eligible candidate's claims. It has been therefore found necessary to determine some infallible test points, which will demonstrate the right of the animal to his title. Determining white elephants is quite a science, and there is a very considerable literature on the subject. The Burmese skilled men fix upon two of these tests as superior to all others. One is that the elephant shall have five toe-nails on his hind feet instead of four. This is a good way of making certain, but occasionally there are indubitably black elephants which have the sacred number of toes. These [775] are white elephants debased by sin, labouring under the evil kan of previous existences, and therefore ineligible for the honours accorded to the real animal. The other test is considered perfectly decisive, no matter what the precise tint of the skin may be. It is this: if you pour water upon a "white" elephant he turns red, while a black elephant only becomes blacker than ever. This is the final test always resorted to in Mandalay. A swarthy specimen who had twenty toe-nails and turned red when he was washed would be forthwith installed in all the honours and emoluments of the Sinbyudaw, no matter what scoffers might say about his colour. Such a creature was the last Lord White Elephant in Mandalay. He would not have been recognised as an albino by any except those who are learned in the science and well versed in the voluminous and puzzling minutiæ of the question. To most people he seemed an impostor, for

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before he was admitted to see the king; and when he did see him the meeting was unpleasant. Next day the portly wundauk "died of apoplexy." 642

Sudden deaths were not at all uncommon. An official displeased him in some way, and Mindôn Min said emphatically, "I don't want to see that man any more." The poor wretch left the royal presence to be seized by lictors outside and killed more or less rapidly. A day or two afterwards his majesty would ask where so-and-so was. "Alas! sire," was the answer, "he died of chagrin shortly after the lord of the earth and ocean cast eyes of displeasure on him." Then the Convener of the Fifth Great Synod quoted a pious saw from the Lawkanidi, and turned his mind to other matters. He made it a special boast that never in all his reign had he ordered an execution. Yet many people died of "official colic" during the time he was on the throne, and Colonel Sladen arrived sixty seconds too late with a respite for one of the pious monarch's own sons. The sound of the hoofs of the English Resident's horse as he galloped past the astrologers' monastery to the execution ground only quickened the headsman's sword. The hapless Padein Mintha should have perished with the setting sun. There were still long shadows slanting up from the trees by the royal foundry when the colonel reined in and upbraided the presiding Minister for his bloodthirsty haste. The Lingayāma Sadaw, when he heard the story, said the ayebaing should have been a Buddhist and might probably become a yahanda in no very distant existence.

Yet King Mindôn was undoubtedly a kindly man. The stories which occasionally appeared about him in the English papers of twenty years or so back were not true. He never got a pea-rifle and "potted" his subjects from the palace verandahs when he was bored. They libelled him who said he did. He was a good Buddhist, and never took life of man or animal. King Thibaw was, perhaps, not quite so strict in his notions. When he first came to the throne he unearthed the spear with which his grandfather Tharrawaddy used occasionally to spit his counsellors. The young king's aim was not quite so good, or his purposes not quite so deadly. He prodded a few heralds and interpreters, and 643

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643 flung the spear at one or two of his father's trusted advisers; but it is not recorded that he ever actually killed anybody with his own hands. In fact, he got on fairly well with his ministers, having drilled the seniors into complete submission to his wishes, and appointed among the younger members those
645 554 who were most of his own way of thinking. The most characteristic man in the Cabinet was the Hlethin Atwinwun, better known as the Hpaungwun. He was only of the second official grade, but none of the four wunmingyis had any real power. They dated from the last reign, and were practically over-ridden by the younger party. The king did, it is true, marry the daughter of the Kampat Mingyi, but that stolid old gentleman was always remarkable for his disinclination to do anything at all, and was not at all likely to exert himself unduly for the sake of precarious preeminence. Therefore the ex-Mayor of Mandalay, in conjunction with the Yanaung prince, a favourite of the Queen Supayalat's, and one or two others of the young Burman party, became the most representative ministers.

The Atwinwun wore the dragon tattooed on the nape of his neck. Fourteen years before he was a slave, and in position little better than a coolie. His rise from this rank might have been a credit to him if it had been effected by his own powers. But he rose by a mere accident, and carried all the tendencies of his original position with him. In 1866, when two of King Thibaw's half-brothers, the Myingun and Myingundaing princes, rose in rebellion against their father, the late king, the Hpaungwun — he seems more familiar under his old title—was one of the guards in the palace. After the rebels had killed their uncle, "the War Prince," they made for the Summer Palace, where the king was at the time along with Colonel Sladen, the British Resident. The Summer Palace is a small building outside the stockade of the actual nandaw, and it was foreseen that his majesty would make immediately for the eastern gate, which is quite close at hand. A man was therefore stationed there with orders to kill King Mindôn whenever he made his appearance. All happened as had been surmised with one slight exception. Royal blood in Mandalay never went outside the palace on its own legs, and when his majesty

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immediate superior a certain fixed sum, determined without regard to favourable seasons, health of the population, or anything of that kind, and as each man was judge over the people in his charge, it may naturally be supposed that the general population did not lead a very happy life. Complaints might be made against extortion and illegal decisions, but the heads of tracts, if they had the money, could always stifle inquiry.

Some of the laws deduced from Manu's eighteen original enactments strike one as being rather singular. For example, if two men quarrel and fight and one of them is killed, there is no penalty; but if a third party interferes and kills or injures one of the original combatants, he must pay the ordinary fine for murder, or causing hurt. Should he himself be killed, the other two are subject to no penalty. When a man is guilty of adultery with another man's wife, if it be proved to be the first time, he must pay the fine for adultery, usually the price of the woman, assessed according to the judge's opinion; if it is her second offence, he only pays half the fine; but if she has been guilty for a third time, he pays no penalty at all.

If one man curses another and some evil happens, he must pay twice the price of the damage incurred; thus, if the man dies he must pay twice the value of a man; two cows if a cow dies, and so on.

When the king dies there is a general pardon of all offences, and a remission of fines, except in the case of debt. There are also seven things which cannot be reclaimed after the death of the king under whom they were promised or given. These are:—1. Deposits. 2. Pledges. 3. Money paid wrongly by the parties in a law-suit. 4. Things carried off by violence, or seized upon without sufficient title. 5. Promises. 6. Things secretly stolen. 7. Things that have been voluntarily given up by one man and taken possession of by another.

The decisions of Mahawthata, Princess Thudhammasari, and others are of little value from a strictly legal point of view. They are chiefly of a religious character. The princess begins by saying that her cases are to be considered as guides to nobles and judges as to the line they

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out to farmers, who were required not only to pay him his rent, but as a rule had also to supply the revenue demanded from the owner by the State. There was therefore no very enthusiastic bidding for his lands, but he always got a tenant somehow or other. It would have been a bad day for the village if no one came forward. Every man in the place would have been called upon to work for a certain period on the thugyi's paddy-fields. These have now been merged in the State lands.

The third class of arable estates consisted of the lands known as bhanda, treasury, or royal fields. These were the private property of the king, and were cultivated ordinarily by the outcast lamaing, crown predial slaves. Sometimes, however, the whole of the farmers in the neighbourhood were summoned by roster to do their one, or three, or five days' work, for which they received no payment; on the contrary, if they tried to escape they were tied up and received a dozen or two according to the humanity of the district governor. Near the capital, where oppression never was so gross as in the outlying provinces, the cultivators of the Lèdawgyi were frequently freed from all taxation but the payment of the family tax, and some even, as in the neighbourhood of Aungbinle, whose revenues were assigned by the king to the great Arakan pagoda, were let off even the ngwedaw. But these *corvées* were very irksome, for the payment of a little money would always ensure the omission of a name from the taikthugyi's list, and the work fell all the harder on the luckless remainder. The whole of the produce of the bhanda lands belonged of course to the king, unless where he had otherwise assigned it. What with revenue paid in kind and the crops of the Lèdawgyi, the king had granaries as vast as those which Joseph built for the king of Egypt. Mindôn Min drew from them to pay his soldiery, varying the monotony from time to time with pieces of rotten Manchester grey shirting. Offerings to the Sacred Order, of whom he daily fed several thousands, also served to keep the storehouses within reasonable bounds. Thibaw Min turned his grain into money with all possible expedition, and the money vanished with equal rapidity. The Lèdaw of course became State land on the Annexation.

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A state envelope was a very curious affair. It was nothing else but two large elephant's tusks. Half-way up they were hollow, and on the mouth there was a heavy gold cover. The tusks were mounted in different parts with gold of no mean thickness. The letter of the lord of the Golden Throne was deposited inside, and borne to its destination with the flourish of trumpets and the braying of drums. The majesty of the Burmese king would have suffered if he had forwarded a communication to the Viceroy in a cover which cost anything under a couple of hundred pounds sterling. In similar fashion the reports of subordinate officials were written with steatite pencils on coarse black paper, and this was rolled up and put in a hollow joint of bamboo. The whole was then enveloped in cloth and sealed with a peacock seal. Communications of this kind were sometimes received by English officials on the British Burma frontier.

The following are a few proverbs:—

If you want to go fast, go the old road.

Wisdom guards life; no one can escape bad luck. The man gifted with wisdom is never left in peace.

Every bird is handsome compared with the vulture.

A mountain is climbed by degrees; property acquired by degrees; wisdom learnt by degrees.

Have regard for a whole family of rats, instead of for one cat.

The more you know, the more luck you have.

A short boat is hard to steer; a dwarf is quick in the temper.

If a cock ruffles up his feathers, it is easy to pluck him. If a man gets angry he is done for.

Constant cutting dulls the knife; constant talking dulls the wits.

A pot half full of water is hard to carry (on the head, of course; because the water sways from side to side); the less a man knows, the harder he is to argue with.

A cow that can give no milk will kick. An ignorant man is to be feared for his ignorance.

If there is much paddy (unhusked rice) in the bowl, it is hard to eat. If there is much talking it is hard to understand.

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be in danger of losing all, as not sufficiently appreciating the dignities conferred upon him.

As soon as Mindôn Min died, or at least as soon as it was officially made known that he was dead (for there are great doubts as to whether he died on the 12th September or on the 1st October 1878, or on some date between these two), as soon as the ministerial announcement came out on the latter date, the bo-ho, the great drum and gong suspended in a tower by the eastern gate, were stopped. The new king's drum and gong were not sounded till nine o'clock in the evening of the funeral, after which they were struck in the ordinary way every three hours. Bands of soldiers and police with gongs patrolled the streets all night long to see that everything was quiet. The princes had been seized and cast into prison some time before, but there was a chance that their adherents might raise disturbances on their behalf, and this precaution was kept up for some time. Meanwhile a pagoda, to serve as a mausoleum, was being run up with the greatest expedition close to the Mint, on the eastern side of the palace, in the outer enclosure, and this was finished in four or five days. The king had specially requested that his body should not be burnt according to ordinary royal custom, and the Sinbyumè, the senior queen and chief mourner, had resolved that this wish should be respected.

The corpse was laid out in state, and on the 3rd October the greater number of the foreigners and the officials of inferior rank were admitted to look upon it. This ceremony was conducted in the Hman-nandaw, the "Glass Palace," a room in which Thibaw Min has received most Europeans since. The body lay in the fore part of the chamber on a gilt couch, or bedstead, studded with bits of glass, and was robed from head to foot in white, a piece of white satin covering the face. The royal number of white umbrellas was canopied overhead, and at the top part of the couch were arranged the regalia in a row. On this occasion the Sinbyumè and the Anauk Nammadaw, the favourite queen of the West Palace, sat by the couch and slowly waved gorgeous peacock fans. At other times the sonless queens took it in turn to watch by the body, two at a time.

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Round about were grouped all the other queens and princesses, weeping piteously. The deceased king's brother, the ex-Pagān Min, the newly elected Thībaw Min, and all the high officials, were behind at the farther end of the room. Suspended over the corpse was a small flat piece of gold shaped like a heart, called thényun, and in this the leip-bya, the butterfly spirit of the departed king, was supposed to dwell till such time as he should be buried. The public lying in state only lasted a few hours, but the body remained there unaltered till the time of the funeral. It was not certainly known whether any attempt at embalming was made, but the body was very much shrunk, and contrasted greatly with the genial presence of his majesty when last he was seen alive.

The funeral took place on the 7th, at noon. It was the first that took place that day, and no other was allowed until the royal obsequies were entirely over. The city gates were shut and strongly guarded to prevent any such going forth if any one had been bold or ignorant enough to attempt it. From the gates of the interior palace stockade to the tomb, the whole route of the procession was laid with scarlet cloth, and round the mausoleum was a wide bamboo fence covered with long cloth, inside of which were some slight sheds, run up for the accommodation of the queens and the chief ministers. It is worthy of notice also that, in a favourable position to view all that passed, was erected a similar mandut for the accommodation of the late Mr. Shaw, then British Resident in Mandalay, his assistants, and the Residency Chaplain, the late Rev. J. A. Colbeck. The Resident and Assistant Resident were admitted in full uniform, wearing their shoes and swords, and it was thought that at length a solution of the great shoe-question had been arrived at, for though in the outer court this dignity had always been allowed them, the fact that later on they saw the king not very far off roused hopes of an audience at a remote date with similar appendages. But alas, the hopes were vain.

Punctually at twelve the procession left the palace gates. At the head of the cortège came the late king's wan, a huge palanquin borne on men's shoulders. Close upon it came

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six elephants, in royal purple and gold housings, and after them two richly caparisoned ponies. Following these were three of the mingyis and a wundauk, the fourth chief minister, the Laungshwe being too old and feeble to appear. Then came the band, called byaing-daung, on such occasions, playing an ancient royal *miserere*, and after it a great crowd of the minor officials, wearing baungs, white official hats. Behind these came a number of men and women bearing the regalia and the utensils of the royal dead, the crown, the heavy court dress, the gold betel box, the spittoon, the hentha, and the rest. Then came an empty coffin, overlaid with scarlet velvet and plates of gold, and immediately behind it the body in a ta-nyin, or hammock of white velvet, attached to a bamboo swathed in red velvet, across which was thrown a white velvet covering spangled with gold. To the ta-nyin were attached two long cloths, sanda-ya-mya, held by a multitude of queens, princesses, and exceedingly young princes (all the older ones being in jail). Above were the eight white umbrellas, and over the Sinbyumè, the chief mourner, were held three of the same royal colour. Her three daughters, one of whom, the Supayalat, became Thibaw Min's queen, were shaded by bright yellow htis, a colour which ranks even over gold. Thus they proceeded to the bamboo enclosure. Then it was announced that the new king, Thibaw Min, was coming, having just received the beit-theit, been anointed by the Brahmin Pônnas. He appeared shortly, seated in a lofty wan, at each of the four corners of which crouched a maiden with bowed head and clasped hands, the whole being carried on the shoulders of forty men. Preceding him was his bodyguard of twelve pages all dressed alike and armed with double-barrelled breechloaders in red serge cases. The Shwe nan-yin payā, the new possessor of the golden throne, remained for half an hour, looking very ill at ease, and little inclined to inspect the splendid spectacle before him. Then he gave the order for the last rites, and in accordance with custom returned immediately to the palace. The actual ceremony of burial was now concluded with as little ceremony as previously there had been superabundance of it, and in a very short time the yahans, of whom there had been a great multitude

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present, were superintending the carrying off of the 108 (representing the number of divisions in the foot of the Lord Buddha, and the beads on the rosary) heaps of alms piled up in great mountains in a long shed to the east of the mausoleum. This was the last of the pious king, Maung Lun, Mindôn Min, the Convener of the Fifth Great Synod.

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The following is the substance of a funeral dirge sung in Mandalay by a Rangoon man whose wife had died in the royal city:—

Gone, gone art thou, sweet wife; gone far away,
Fair still and charmful, stretched on thy cold bier,
As erst thou wert upon that joyous day
When first I wed thee; gladsome brought thee here,
And joyed to think that thou wert mine. Ah me!
The butterfly's silk wings are shred; no more,
Ne'er more to rest upon thy head, Mah Meit—
Sweet name for wife: "affectionate." Deplore
Her death ye nats that rule forests and streams,
The hills and vales, and greater ye who guard
The sacred law, the holy shrines, the beams
Of silent moon, and sunlight baking hard
The hot-scorched earth, not scorchèd more and seared
Than is the parchment of my tortured heart.
Nay, bear with me, good neighbours. Be not feared.
I am not mad. The nat-so hath no part
Of me or mine. The spaewife sure hath said it.

Ay, thou wert mine when last I trod the earth,
Ere yet, all sinful, I was born as man,
And yet again, in yet another birth,
I'll claim thee; when mayhap a happier kan,
A fairer sum of merit, hardly won,
Will lead us on, linked-armed, to linkèd death,
That so progressing, joyful we may run
Through all life's changes, and with single breath,
Through heavens and zān and rupa, we may bound
To Ne'ban, blissful home of rest. So mote it be.

Alas, thou wert from Hanthawaddy's plains,
And were we there, where thou so fain hadst stayed,
A stately pomp had honoured thy remains,
In silk and velvet wound, with gilded shade
Of wide umbrella's pride, and regal spire
Had towered to the skies, all seemly draped
With flowing cloths and princesses' attire,
Such as now thou dost wear, from earth escaped

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

647 643 The breadth of view, the knowledge of other countries, of other thoughts, that comes to those who have wealth and leisure, were wanting to these ministers of the king. Natural capacity many of them had, but that is not of much value until it is cultivated. You cannot learn in the narrow precincts of a village the knowledge necessary to the management of great affairs; and therefore in affairs of state this want of any noble or leisured class was a very serious loss to the government of Burma. It had great and countervailing advantages, of which I will speak when I come to local government, but that it was a heavy loss as far as the central government goes no one can doubt. There was none of that check upon the power of the king which a powerful nobility will give; there was no trained talent at his disposal. The king remained absolutely supreme, with no one near his throne, and the ministers were mere puppets, here to-day and gone to-morrow. They lived by the breath of the king and court, and when they lost favour there was none to help them. They had no faction behind them to uphold them against the king. It can easily be understood how disastrous all this was to any form of good government. All these ministers and governors were corrupt; there was corruption to the core.

647 652 When it is understood that hardly any official was paid, and that those who were paid were insufficiently paid, and had unlimited power, there will be no difficulty in seeing the reason. In circumstances like this all people would be corrupt. The only securities against bribery and abuse of power are adequate pay, restricted authority, and great publicity. None

16;Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

Yet this is the class from whom we most of us obtain our knowledge of Burmese life, whom we see most of, whose opinions we accept as reflecting the truth of Burmese thought. No wonder we are so often astray. 586 177 647

Amongst these, the taking of second, and even third, wives is not at all uncommon, and naturally divorce often follows. Among the great mass of the people it is very uncommon. I cannot give any figures. There are no records kept of marriage or of divorce. What the proportion is it is impossible to even guess. I have heard all sorts of estimates, none founded on more than imagination. I have even tried to find out in small villages what the number of divorces were in a year, and tried to estimate from this the percentage. I made it from 2 to 5 per cent. of the marriages. But I cannot offer these figures as correct for any large area. Probably they vary from place to place and from year to year. In the old time the queen was very strict upon the point. As she would allow no other wife to her king, so she would allow no taking of other wives, no abuse of divorce among her subjects. Whatever her influence may have been in other ways, here it was all for good. But the queen has gone, and there is no one left at all. No one but the hangers-on of whom I have spoken, examples not to be followed, but to be shunned. 586 587 [177] [643]

But of this there is no manner of doubt, that this freedom of marriage and divorce leads to no license. There is no confusion between marriage or non-marriage, and even yet public opinion is a very great check upon divorce. It is not considered right to 581 586

Zi: Htin Aung B-6 (ca. 1960) 1967 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

in spite of its greatness in other directions, from being a great period of Burmese literature. The love of beauty, which is the basis of all literature, had adequate satisfaction in the developed art of architecture. The poets of Pagan wrote their poems in bricks, instead of words, and their pagodas are still famous. When one stands on the shore of the Irrawaddy and looks towards the ruins of Pagan, one is reminded of the delicate beauty of an incomplete poem.[1]

Pagan fell in 1287 as the result of the Tartar onslaught during the time of Kubla Khan, the Scourge of God, and the country broke up into several little States, each attempting to control the others. For the next fifty years, political struggles went on in the capitals, but they failed to disturb the peace of smaller towns and villages. Many who had grown tired of the strife around the thrones flocked to the quiet of the village monasteries in order to find peace. Religion went on undiminished, but the learning connected with it decayed, for the royal patronage was lacking. Architecture also decayed because there was no royal support and because the country had become poor. Men turned to literature for its own sake, and during this period Burmese prose and poetry assumed definite forms with fully developed diction, rhythm, rhyme and style.[2]

[1] Many temples and pagodas of the Pagan period are in an excellent state of preservation and are still in use as places of worship. Scott O'Connor's *Mandalay and Other Cities* contains fine illustrations of the more famous of these religious buildings.

The achievement of the Pagan kings, the 'Temple Builders', is summed up by Harvey thus: 'The legacy of their fleeting sway has enriched posterity for ever. It was they who made the sun-scorched wilderness, the solitary plain of Myingyan, to blossom forth into the architectural magnificence of Pagan. If they produced no nation-builder like Simon de Montfort, no lawgiver like Edward I, they unified Burma for more than two centuries, and that in itself was an achievement. But their role was æsthetic and religious rather than political. To them the world owes in great measure the preservation of Theravada Buddhism, one of the purest faiths mankind has ever known. Brahminism had strangled it in the land of its birth; in Ceylon its existence was threatened again and again; east of Burma it was not yet free from priestly corruptions; but the kings of Burma never wavered, and at Pagan the stricken faith found a city of refuge. Vainglorious tyrants built themselves lasting sepulchres, but none of these men has a tomb. . . . These men's magnificence went to glorify their religion, not to deck the tent wherein they camped during this transitory life.'—*History of Burma*, p. 70.

[2] Ibid., p. 103. Since that time, prose and poetry show continuous development. The full history of Burmese literature still remains unwritten. However, the *Anthology of Burmese Literature*, a Government publication,

536* 867 175 [643] These problems, which interest us now, interested still more t

audience of U Kyin U's day, for then the throne was disgraced, half Burma was lost, and men were depressed and tired of life; many shunned the court and lived in retirement and in peace, and some turned to the comforts of religion and the monastery. And there was the eternal question of succession, for Alaungpaya's dynasty—the last in Burma—did not settle the succession by any fixed rule; sometimes brother succeeded brother, at other times son or grandson; promises and appointments with regard to the succession were made only to be broken later. Men did not know which prince to follow; Bagyidaw, the reigning king, was a good man, a kind man, but a weak man also, under the thumb of a wicked and scheming queen; a kindly man, a good husband, he was responsible for the collapse of organization at the court and the resulting British victory; it would not do to choose a weak prince like that king and like Zayathein; but it was not very safe to choose a strong prince, for he might be foolish like Kaywut and be overcome by the wisdom and cunning of the British. Men were troubled in mind and weary of politics, and that feeling of tiredness with the world is found in U Kyin U. In fact the political conditions of the times, especially the war with the British, must have contributed much to the ideas expressed in the plays; ideas that must have been appreciated by the people who had just realized, with the defeat of their forces and the death of their General Bandoola—a product of the heroic age of triumph—in the recent war, the transitory nature of human glory, the bitterness of defeat, and the sufferings of war. The sympathetic portrayal of Kaywut was due mainly to the genius of the dramatist, but the recent defeat must have contributed something towards it, for both U Kyin U and his audience could see in Kaywut their own court, foolish but none the less pathetic through defeat. They could sympathize with that character as Milton did with Satan. The ability to appreciate the point of view of the other side, the ability to see the good points in the villain, are also due in some measure to the same war, for the Burmese found the British to be valiant foes, who treated the captured wounded with loving care—a practice unknown before in the East—and found them to be conquerors who were kind to the people of the annexed provinces. Therefore the plays of U Kyin U are the product of his times.

536* U Kyin U, with his spirits and magic and gods and heroic deeds, is doubtless a romantic. His scenes, where some of the characters on the stage are supposed not to see and hear the others, though all are

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 A21 Burma
Burmese AP4

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troubled in mind, because he has only a daughter to succeed him. While his daughter, the Shan princess, plays and sings and dances in her garden, the merchants with the brother pass by. The brother and the princess fall in love with each other and plight their troth in song and dance. The chieftain arrives on the scene, but fortunately for all concerned, he approves of the young man and proclaims him heir.

Meanwhile the sister in Thaton is having her adventures. A god, who had been brother to her in a previous existence, gives her an ear-ring as a token of affection. She puts it away for wearing on special occasions. The king passes by her window, falls in love, and makes her queen. That night, as the new queen awaits her husband, she sings happy songs to herself, then puts on the ear-ring, and falls asleep. She now looks like an ogress for, unknown to the well-meaning god, the ear-ring causes its wearer to have the appearance of an ogress. The king, on entering, thinks her to be an ogress who has assumed human form to bring disaster to his kingdom. So he orders her execution and commands that her foster-father himself must execute her, as he suspects the nobleman of having known all the time that his adopted daughter is an evil being. So at dawn, the girl is put into a velvet bag,[1] and the doting father is ordered by soldiers to beat her to death. He refuses, in spite of tortures, until the girl begs him to dispatch her quickly and end her agony. She dies, singing pathetic songs, while the father and even the soldiers cry. In compliance with her request before her death, the dead body is sent floating down the river on a raft. The father then engages a bricklayer to build a pagoda on the spot where she was executed. The bricklayer is a cynical old fellow, who thinks some unnecessary fuss is being made of a dead girl. He is a comic character.

The god of the forest stops the raft and lays the dead queen on the river bank. Her ghost appears before the brother, now chief of the Shan state in succession to his father-in-law. He at once leaves for Thaton attended by a minister. The god of the forest, unknown to the brother, causes him to find the body of his sister. He is grief-stricken, and guessing from the velvet bag what had happened, swears revenge on the king of Thaton. He

[1] According to established custom, Burmese royalty were put into velvet bags before execution. Also, as no blood of royal persons should be shed on the scaffold, the usual method of their execution was by drowning, burning or beating. [645] [681]

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

536 only wife.[1] Yet Saw-may cries in the last scene, and closes the play on a note of pathos. The same scene appears also to be an attempt at sensational effect in showing the bedchamber of the two lovers on their nuptial night, but perhaps the fault is not more heinous and not less excusable than the bedroom and underclothes scenes of some modern plays and films in Europe and America. In spite of its faults, the scene must appeal to many because of the tender pathos and beautiful poetry it contains. In any case it delighted the audience of the day, and it seems even likely that the dramatist put in the scene against his own artistic sense to please the audience and the actors who admired so much the pathetic endings of *The History of Thatos* and the 'Baboon Play'.

The immense popularity of the play tempted the dramatist to write a second part to it.

As Saw-may is soon going to give birth to an heir, the rival queen in jealousy plots with the court astrologer to bring about her downfall. A son is soon born, and the astrologer, summoned by the king to foretell the destiny of the little prince, pronounces him to be a wizard and Saw-may a witch, although he realizes that the child is destined to be a great emperor. King Saw-phay, believing the astrologer, exiles both the mother and the son, and she leaves, singing sorrowful songs of farewell. Wandering into the forest, she meets her old friend the god, who sprinkles some water on the child, making him grow up at once into a youth of sixteen years. As he is a man born to be a great king, flames issue from his mouth and arms. He wants to know who his father is, but the mother and the god evade his question. He is seized by a desire to worship the banyan tree under which the Buddha attained Buddhahood, but as he cannot go to India, he prays that a replica of the tree should grow before him, and at once the desired replica appears. Overjoyed, the young prince again successfully prays for a wall of fire to appear round the replica, so that no one can go near it except himself. In the meantime the god has gone to the king and told him the truth regarding his son, scolding him for his cruel treatment of the senior queen. As the king doubts his words, the god asks him to go and see

[1] It is neither a crime nor a sin to marry two wives, but in the case of commoners, society frowns on it. Her husband's taking even a mistress is ground for divorce for a wife. But Burmese kings, mainly for state reasons, had more than one wife. This is the only Burmese play where the hero ends up by marrying two wives.

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[643]

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

of course there were limits to the latitude allowed to him. The neglect of these conventions was supposed to result in disaster to the troupe and the death through diarrhoea of the actor who took the part or cracked the joke, and it would certainly result in the whole troupe being beaten by the audience and then put in prison by the officials. On the whole, the charge of irreligiousness attributed to the actors was not justified, and throughout the years, they had never been known even to attempt to evade the conventions. There were also conventions connected with social decorum. Kissing was not allowed on the stage. Although no penalty, supposed or real, was attached to it, this convention has never been broken. The actors could wear reproductions of all the regalia of a king, except the golden shoes, which only the king himself and princes in the line of succession could wear. The breaking of this rule was supposed to result in the death by diarrhoea of the actor who wore the shoes, but it was not punishable as a crime if they were actually worn on the stage, and it is known to have been broken sometimes. All the conventions, including those connected with spirit-dancing, still exist at the present day.

During the decadent period the platform stage, the elaborate scenery and curtains were introduced from French and English sources, for French touring companies often performed before the court towards the close of Mindon's reign (1853–78), and from about 1870 English touring companies of actors often visited Rangoon. With the performances of these companies of European actors, the general public had no contact. At the court the king and a few courtiers, out of respect for the French embassy, witnessed presentations of French operettas, but as they did not understand French and the actors could speak no Burmese, the court found the performances boring at times. At Rangoon the English actors presented musical comedies, or more truly, musical shows, to an audience composed entirely of English residents. It must be stated that the touring actors did in no way introduce specimens of the French or English dramas, for what they presented were third-rate musical shows. But they did introduce some examples of western stage-craft, and the Burmese professional actors, ever on the alert for borrowings, copied wholesale the platform stage, the curtain, and the elaborate stage scenery, with the result that, during the decadent period, the Burmese stage came to be a copy of the European stage. At Rangoon a permanent theatre was even built, a thing unknown to

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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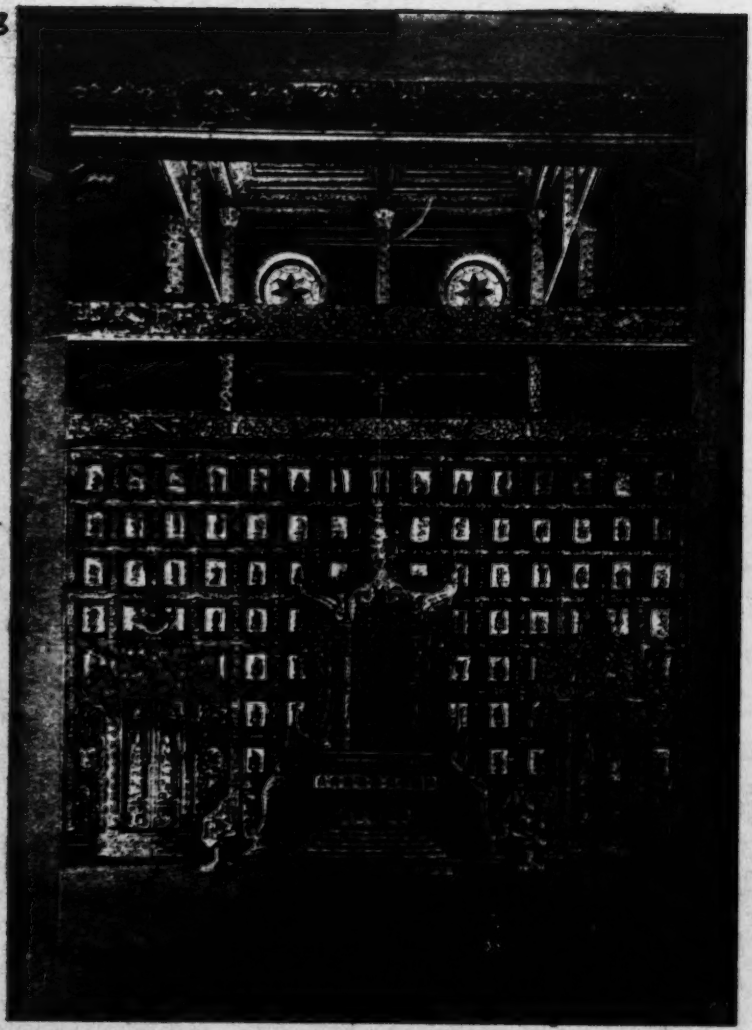

1. ROYAL THRONE. [Photolights.

[facing Title Page]

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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90. PAYA SUN-KAN.

(*Payá sun-kan*), or privately prepared, is conveyed. The day is devoted to contemplation, and the night is passed at the *zayát*. Those who keep the duty-day present offerings at the *zedi* and the adjoining *kyaung*. At either of these places a *yahán* is invited to rehearse the precepts, which the laity chant verse by verse after his lead (*thila-kan*). Passages from other scriptures are added, with their interpretations. This is called *Tayá-haw*—the preaching of the Law. The great Mun King, Yazadiyit of Pegu, in the year 1400 A.D., is reported to have been so impressed by the preaching of a *yahán* that he abandoned a campaign on which he had embarked. More than once in Burman history the peaceful contest of building rival temples has been substituted for battle by opposing armies.

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The Buddha has passed out of existence. While existent, all that the Buddha could accomplish for any being was the human service of showing him the way to work out deliverance by individual effort. Self-reliance is the cardinal principle. There is none to hear prayer. The true significance of the popular worship is not apprehended unless this be borne in mind. No virtue can surpass that of the Inestimable Master (*Myasswa Payá*) who fulfilled the Law and bequeathed it to men. To cultivate the memory of his transcendent merit is itself meritorious in the first degree. Such is the personal side of the cult, to which the effigies of the founder appeal. Before the images of the Buddha are performed the gestures of homage, and are placed offerings symbolical of veneration — tapers lighted at the shrine, flowers

91. YAHAN RECITING THE PRECEPTS (TAYA-HAW).

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Bur[illegible]
Burmese AP4

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217. PLASTERER'S SCAFFOLD ON ZEDI.

(*Kathé*) excel in this work and form colonies for the industry. Attempts have been made in Europe to imitate the scroll-patterns on the Jacquard loom, as well as to print them. But the imitations fall too far short of the original, which is nearly the same front and back. The best *lun-tayâ* silks cost ten to fifteen rupees the square foot, which makes two hundred to three hundred rupees for the *pasô*. Only an inch or two a day can be woven. Italian methods of carding, dyeing, and finishing silk, were introduced by the late King, Mindôn Min, and have helped to develop an important industry in Mandalay. Stripe and tartan patterns are woven in this way, chiefly from China silk. Fine texture and delicate tints are aimed at, rather than rich colour and design. The *pasô* of

[435] twenty cubits, one cubit wide, costs ten to twenty rupees.

293 The Burman umbrella (*tî*) is on the Chinese model—a bamboo frame with paper cover. The Chinese umbrella has a thin paper cover, the Burman has [171] bast-paper, which outlasts several of the other. But the Chinese umbrellas are cheaper, better waterproofed, and sun-proof. The Burman *tî* is waterproofed by occasional oiling with crude petroleum. A waterproof size made from the fruit of the *tè* is used for fixing the paper to the ribs and the cotton twines that connect them. The red, the [186] gilt and the white umbrellas are emblems of state. The [554] first two denote official rank, according to the number assigned. Such umbrellas [532] have stems of turned wood, six to eight feet long, to allow of the *tî* being borne over the officer on horseback or in his chariot, by attendants on foot (No. 375). The

218. SCULPTURING MARBLE IMAGES.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

388. ROYAL INSIGNIA.

supervision, are combined into a district under a European magistrate, the Deputy Commissioner, who has a European officer for district superintendent of police, commanding an average force of four hundred native constables. At the district headquarters are a police-depôt, treasury, jail and hospital, besides courthouses and offices. The district officer hears appeals from the *myoôks*, and tries all offences except the gravest and heavy civil suits. This organisation is the backbone of the civil government, the 'Commission.' There are thirty-six such districts, and four hundred native magistrates, on salaries of one hundred to eight hundred rupees a month, besides one hundred and twenty-five native honorary magistrates. The success of this economical administration, organised by Sir Arthur Phayre, in ensuring the safety of life and property and the fulfilment of contracts has given a new value to enterprise and thrift. The British garrison of Burma in 1900 consisted of three thousand European and seven thousand five hundred Indian regular troops.

To return to native Burma—In the centre of the capital, and by euphemism of creation, rises the *pyatthat* which canopies the principal throne in the great hall of audience, where envoys and tributary princes used to be received. Here also the princes of his own blood and the high officers of state paid court to the king on *gadáw-ne*, days when they craved pardon of the king for their shortcomings. The throne (No. 1) is ascended by a stair at the back, leading from the council-room of the king's cabinet of palace ministers, who were the medium of communication with the *Hluttaw*. On such occa-

389. ANCIENT CAPITAL, SAGAING.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

644 On such occa-
sions the king appeared in the royal insignia, which otherwise only figure as
[643] emblems of state. The insignia in the illustration are surmounted by a queen's
crown (*sĭbòn*). The shape of a king's crown is seen in Nos. 151 and 425. There
[346] being but a single palace and thousands of *kyaungs* and temples, the palace
[344] appears to resemble a *kyaung*. But the converse is the fact; the *kyaung* it
is which in virtue of its religious character shares the
distinction of the palace. The most recent style adopted
by the Burman sovereigns was *Shin-Bayín*—Lord of
Lords. A chief title was *Sinbyú Shin*—Lord of the
White Elephant. Every subject prostrated himself in
the presence of the king, with face averted from the
effulgence of the royal countenance. An official called
thandawzín used to repeat aloud the words uttered by
the king. The ensign betokening the presence of the
king and of the chief queen (*mìbayá*) is the *tĭbyú* (p. 101).
Two to eight were borne according to the solemnity of the
occasion. The chief queens were frequently half-sisters
of the kings. For all the royal acts, the lying, rising,
eating, speaking, there are euphemisms proper to the
occasion; one of the most current of these is *shwepawddaw*
—the golden foot. At his demise the sovereign is said
to migrate to the abode of *nats* or delectable land; the
staff of his *tĭbyú* was broken. The paraphernalia of the
king's service were elaborate; but in his attitude to
the *yahán* he comported himself as an ordinary man.
The Royal White Elephant was maintained in great
pomp; it ate and drank out of golden vessels and had
a retinue for its service. An elephant really white—
probably an albino—was captured in 1805, but was
pampered so that it died. A second was captured in
1806 which lived for fifty years. Other "white ele-
phants" kept for state have enjoyed their reputation
in virtue of possessing certain assumed criteria of the
"white" variety, as to the number of the toes, direction
of the tail-tuft and other distinctions, without regard to the colour of the skin.
644 Change of capital at the accession of a new sovereign was characteristic of
633 Burman empire, even when there was no change of dynasty or other political
convulsion. Events of the latter kind were no doubt the original reasons of
such changes. Next to Pagán, Sagáing, on the right bank of the Irawadi,
facing the flat and now desolate site of Ava, is the most impressive of the

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584. CARVED FIGURE OF NAT.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

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418. SUNLAUNG AT THADINDYUT FESTIVAL.

and, in order to possess its proper value, should be completed in a day and a night. This is the only approach to a vigil. The texture is loose, and broad bands of tinsel are shot through to make up the woof faster.

Tawthalin is a minor festival, falling in Lent, and observed only in Pegu. The *Tawthalin* offerings are distinguished by being in thousands, one thousand little cakes, one thousand plantains, and so on (No. 282). The number one thousand is said to be symbolical

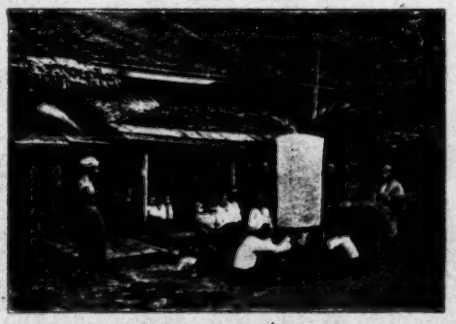
[801] of the thousand *gâta* or stanzas of the *Wéthandayâ zat*, the legend of Gawdama Buddha's last incarnation but one, closely prefiguring the final incarnation.

782 The above are the Buddhist festivals, which are celebrated by the whole population together, with all the *éclat* they can give them. The only other
776 recurring observances of a religious character have nothing to do with Buddhism, and are rejected by all earnest and enlightened Buddhists. These observances, if not furtively conducted, as is often the case, are kept by individuals only, or by households at a time; they have sufficient in common with the *nat* worship of the hill tribes, to show what the original Burman and Taláing worship may have been. Unlike the Karén, who knows only of evil *nats*, the Burman has both good and evil spirits. The former belong

776 to the land of the *zat* ro-
772 mance, the latter are chiefly
775 the survival of the primitive paganism. In the Burman cosmogony, *nat-yua* is the delectable land to which, by a courtesy analogous to the

● [643] German "*hoch-*" and "*höchst-selig*," the kings are said to migrate at their demise.

[524] A higher order than *nat* is *thadyâ* and *thadyâ-min*, and above these the highest order of being, *byammâ*, the cloud-



419. FIRE-BALLOONS AT THADINDYUT.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

What is of further importance for our present inquiry is the fact that the tradition thus established throughout Burma was the Hīnayāna tradition, not the Mahāyāna.[20] It will therefore be the more significant if we find in Burmese Buddhism a positive conception of Nirvana, for, in the past, scholars have frequently associated a negative conception with the Hīnayāna tradition, enlarging the distance between the two schools: Nirvana might spell paradise in China or Japan, it was argued, but for Southern Buddhists it was the Void.

There were, it is true, outposts of the Mahāyāna faith in Burma, notably at Pagan, where Mahāyāna cults survived for perhaps two centuries after A-naw-ra-hta's conversion, tolerated by the now dominating Hīnayāna tradition which absorbed some elements of the sister faith.[20] There is also evidence, not only of Mahāyāna rivalry, but also of Brahmanical Hinduism (as at Pagan) in Southern Burma in the earlier centuries.[21]

A first glance at the map may occasion surprise that Mahāyāna influence on Burmese Buddhism was not more considerable, for China, where the Mahāyāna tradition thrived for several centuries, is just across the north east border and the Burmese themselves are a Mongolian race. A second glance, however, discovers the far distances between centres of influence. There is a sweeping borderland of mountain ranges and remote valleys, and, in the earlier centuries, the buffer state of Nanchao lay in between China and the Burmese kingdoms. The sea route from India was the easier route to Southern Burma and Indian traders and adventurers were the forerunners of Indian missionaries.

When all qualifications have been made, we must conclude that the formative tradition of Buddhism in Burma was the Hīnayāna, introduced from India and nourished from Ceylon. And from the eleventh century onwards, "the stronger vitality of the Southern school completely absorbed, assimilated and obliterated the Northern school."[22]

The royal encouragement given by A-naw-ra-hta was frequently echoed by later rulers. Burmese kings were styled 'great Captains of the Law,' and as late as the nineteenth century good King Mindon convened the 'Fifth Buddhist Council' at Mandalay, when the scriptures were engraved on over seven hundred tablets of marble.

[20] The term, Hīnayāna, is sometimes regarded as disparaging. 'Southern' or 'Theravāda' Buddhism might be preferred in this connection, but it is probably less confusing to use the terms now familiar in the West.

[20] Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma*, p. 93, and *Theravāda Buddhism in Burma*, pp. 150 ff.

[21] Ray, *Theravāda Buddhism in Burma*, pp. 86, 87; cf. Taw Sein Kho, *Census Report* (Burma, 1901), p. 32.

[22] Taw Sein Kho, *ibid.*, p. 32.

178 671 Since those remote times, the Burmese customary law has developed naturally, side by side with the growth and development of Burmese society. The Burmese have no great national code of laws gathered and authorized by a powerful king, no great charter forced from an unwilling king, no great statute passed by a national assembly fighting against tyranny, but nonetheless the Burmese customary law shows a conception of justice and a love of personal liberty in which every Burmese must take pride.

671 643 To the Burmese, before the partial introduction of the English legal system, law meant civil law. To them, civil law was purely customary, and besides custom, there could be no other source of law. The idea of legislation by a parliament or a congress, or by executive order of the king was unfamiliar to the Burmese. In English common law, the king could do no [685 694] wrong, and thus he was above the law. But with the Burmese, the king himself was not exempt from the operation of the civil law, and the king was often the defendant in civil suits, usually for wrongful seizure of land. Admittedly the king was above his subjects, and he had the right to levy taxes in service or in kind, but he was also under a duty to give protection to the people. To protect the people and to preserve the peace, the king must prevent wrong-doing and punish wrong-doers, and it was for the king to proclaim which acts were wrongs from the point of view of public peace. Thus, at the beginning of each reign, the king proclaimed his list of crimes, and the punishments he would mete out to those who were found guilty of those crimes.

671 681 The list of crimes varied with each king, but the usual crimes were offenses against the state, murder, robbery, theft, rape, and serious defamation. The usual penalties were whipping, confinement in irons, maiming, banishment, and death, with or without forfeiture to the king's treasury of the of- [684] fender's possessions. In the eighteenth century, adultery was added to the list of crimes, with the punishment of whipping for both the woman and her paramour, and proclamation of their guilt by beat of drums and gongs. In the nineteenth

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century, the punishment for abduction of women was enhanced from one of confinement in irons to that of death. Thus what the English lawyer would understand by the term "criminal law" was considered to be the personal concern of the king. Therefore, when the ruling king died, and a new king ascended the throne, all persons undergoing punishment for crimes committed under the previous king, automatically were freed. Criminal jurisdiction therefore was considered to be merely an administrative function of the crown, and it concerned the executive, and not the judicial, officers of the state. Modern European writers have ever emphasized the despotism of Burmese kings, but the Royal Edicts proclaimed at the beginning of each reign clearly showed that the Burmese king was not a blood-thirsty individual devoid of all mercy. In the Edicts, we find the king delegating the function of meting out criminal justice to three of his Chief Ministers, admonishing at the same time that they should temper justice with mercy. The king in the Edicts ordered that even in capital crimes, the punishment should be one of banishment, and the sentence of death was to be reserved for vicious criminals. Even when the sentence of death had been passed, the execution was to be postponed for at least ten days so as to enable the king to consider the case and alter the punishment to one of banishment if the facts justified such alteration.

But as in England, the king was considered to be the fountain of justice, for his was the supreme court of the land. The kingdom was divided into provinces, each under a viceroy. Each province was further divided into cities, each city under a governor. Each city or city area was subdivided into towns and each town or town area into villages, with a headman for each town and each village. The courts of the headmen of towns or villages dealt with suits of small value, and there was a right of appeal from those courts to the courts of the governors of cities. The courts of the governors exercised both original and appellate jurisdiction, and appeals from these courts lay to the court of the viceroy, which also exercised both

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original and appellate jurisdiction. These officers were executive officers under the crown, but when they sat as judges in their respective courts, they were judges in the full sense of the term, for they were free of all executive control. Finally there was the Supreme Court. This final court of appeal consisted of the king as the president, the crown prince as the vice-president, the four chief ministers, and their four deputies. The king, however, attended only on rare occasions, and thus the crown prince usually presided over the court. The law that these courts administered and interpreted was the customary law of the Burmese people. One special feature of the courts was their attempt to settle the case before actually trying it. Lawyers, who were attached to the courts as officers, although their fees were payable by the litigants, also endeavored to conciliate the contending parties. Often the parties decided to refer their suit to an arbitrator. There was no right of appeal from the decision of an arbitrator, on the ground that the arbitrator was chosen by the contending parties themselves. When a suit had been heard and decided, the successful party offered a dish of pickled tea to the other party, and if the latter accepted, the parties were deemed to have been reconciled, and there could be no appeal from the decision of the court. The refusal of the unsuccessful party to accept the offered dish of pickled tea served as his notice of appeal.

Burmese history, like the history of many countries, records rebellions, invasions, and violent struggles for power, but the development of Burmese customary law has been singularly free from catastrophes and sudden changes. There has never been a revolution in the Burmese customary law. However, the law in the course of its long history experienced three great impacts with the outside world. The first was the impact of Hindu jurisprudence, second was the impact of Buddhism, and the third was the impact of English law as the result of the British conquest of the country towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Some of my colleagues of this conference have already